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**Looking inside the Black Box: The role of Host Country Offices  
in negotiating international volunteering for development**

Behafarid Barzegar MSc (Dev Mgmt)

**Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

Development Policy and Practice

The Open University, UK

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## **Abstract**

This research aims to investigate the significance of the Host Country Offices (HCOs) of International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations (IVCOs) in explaining the gap between the theory and practice of International Volunteering Service (IVS) in development. HCOs are operational arms of IVCOs that work in developing countries, but they are rarely studied in the literature and remain a ‘black box’. Focusing on five HCOs in Malawi, this study seeks to address the gaps in the literature by examining the different relationships between the HCOs and their multiple stakeholders: their head office, the key players involved in mobilising and implementing IVS in development projects (the government, the donors and the partner organisations), and the volunteers.

The research uses the idea of ‘boundary managers’ to describe HCOs and their role in managing multiple mandates and negotiate relationships with different stakeholders. The conceptual framework is based on different kinds of trust and power relations to explore how HCOs negotiate these relationships and to demonstrate how other factors such as asymmetries in knowledge and information help explain the gap between the theory and practice of IVS. A cross-case study methodology is used that involves observation, document review and interviews with staff in head offices, HCOs, partners, beneficiaries and volunteers. The study shows that a development-focused IVS strategy, and fair and democratic organisational policies and structures that encourage staff contributions to knowledge, make more efficient use of human, physical and logistical resources, and can create trust-based relationships between the HCOs and their stakeholders leading to better processes, and potentially, to better and more consistent outcomes.

The study makes empirical, theoretical, and policy contributions by identifying HCOs as influential actors in IVS, characterising their status as boundary managers, and making policy recommendations for HCOs to manage the relationships between different stakeholders more effectively.

*The sacrifices of my parents; the support and encouragement of the amazing people whom I am privileged to have as friends; the resilience of Iranian friends and family to stay connected; a quarter of century of experience in management, and the effort of preparing for this thesis have contributed to the greatest achievement of my life:  
the love of Eddie*

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## List of Acronyms

DFID	Department for International Development, UK
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HCO	Host Country Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Government Organisations
IVCO	International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations
IVS	International Volunteering Service
JOVC	Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers
LI	Low Income (country)
LMI	Lower Middle Income (country)
MNC	Multi-National Corporations
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSaP	Malawi Scotland Partnership
NGDO	Non-Government Development Organisations
NGO	Non-Government Organisations
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SMP	Scotland Malawi Partnership
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas International
WB	The World Bank

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Every year, thousands of people from the global North (and more recently, but to a lesser extent, from the developed countries of the South) travel to developing countries of the South as volunteers taking part in a variety of development programmes and projects through international volunteering service (IVS) (VOESA, 2010; Hartman et al., 2014). The term IVS was first introduced by Sherradan et al. (2008, p. 397) and has been widely used in the literature (Devereux, 2010; Lough, 2012; Lough and Carter-Black, 2015). It describes an organised period of engagement and contribution to society by volunteers who work across an international border, in another country, or countries. There is no common terminology for organisations that sponsor and facilitate international volunteering. They are variously referred to as international volunteer ‘sending organisation’ (IVSO) (Sherraden et al., 2008; Lough and Carter-Black, 2015), ‘sending agency (IVSA)’ (Impey and Overton, 2014) or ‘service organisation (IVSO)’ (Nelson and Child, 2016) and ‘volunteering for development organisation (VfD)’ (Burns et al., 2015, p. 7). This thesis uses the term International Volunteer Cooperation Organisation (IVCO) as ascribed by the IVCO Forum<sup>1</sup>.

IVCOs base their actions on humanitarian or developmental goals such as poverty alleviation, empowerment, and participation of the marginalised people in poor countries. However, the literature on international volunteering shows that the intended goals of international volunteering are not always realised for the targeted beneficiaries, sometimes resulting in negative consequences within the host country which local actors have to negotiate in their daily lives long after the volunteers have left (Heron, 2005; Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Aked, 2014; Impey and Overton, 2014; Trau, 2014; Burns et al., 2015; Ackers and Ackers-Johnson, 2017b). The tendency

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<sup>1</sup> The IVCO Forum is recognised as ‘the most significant global network of international volunteer cooperation organisations’ (IVCO, 2016, p. 4).

in scholarly literature is to focus on international volunteers when seeking to attribute the positive or negative impacts of IVS practice. But literature that focuses largely on volunteers often fails to explain the contradictions and imbalance between theory and practice of IVS and favours the type of outcomes which support the continuity and expansion of current practices in international volunteering. Host Country Offices (HCOs) of the IVCOs are pivotal to the course of determining development interventions appropriate for volunteer placement and managing all the processes involved before, during, and often after the volunteers' time in post. In doing so, HCOs have to negotiate relationships with multiple and diverse IVS stakeholders with fast-changing interests, such as international donor agencies, the government, public and private sector institutions in the host country, international and national partner organisations, consultants, contractors and representatives of beneficiary groups, as well as their own IVCO head offices and the volunteers. However, the literature on IVS offers little or no focus on the role of HCOs, which are crucial in determining projects and placements for volunteers. Thus the existing literature demonstrates a gap between the theory and practice of development through IVS.

This research aims to explain the gap between the theory and practice of development interventions through IVS by analysing how relationships are negotiated between HCOs and the stakeholders in IVS programmes. Negotiating relationships involves the range and unpredictability of human behaviour of which trust and power are key influential variables that shape the expectations and behaviours of people and organisations (Nierenberg, 1987; Koeszegi, 2004; Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Olekalns and Smith, 2009; Pettit, 2013). In turn, types of trust and power relations influence, and are influenced by, a number of factors such as histories (for example, past conflict among the actors, or the way organisations may have changed over time), differences in culture (for example, cultural norms associated with social status or gender), and use of language (such as the differences in the way people interpret certain words and phrases), but most crucially by information exchange and knowledge sharing between stakeholders (Hardy et al., 1998; Kopelman and Olekalns, 1999; Koeszegi, 2004; Fisher et. al, 2011). This study focuses on the roles of trust and power in analysing how relationships are negotiated between HCOs and the IVS stakeholders in order to gain insight

into the gap between the theory and practice of IVS. Using Malawi as the country context, the study examines five IVCOs: United Nations Volunteers (UNV), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Voluntary Services Overseas International (VSO), The Peace Corps, and Progressio. Explanation on why and how Malawi and the above IVCOs were chosen for this research is given in Chapter 4, sections 4.4 and 4.5. The thesis is based on the analysis of field data on three categories of relationships between the HCOs and:

- i) The international volunteers,
- ii) Their IVCO head offices, and
- iii) The other stakeholders such as partner organisations, government and international funding agencies.

This thesis argues that different types of trust, power relations and the way knowledge is shared in the negotiation of relationships between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders, influence the course of IVS, and its contribution to development. HCOs have to negotiate relationships with a large array of heterogeneous individuals and organisations with diverse interests that are involved in the processes of development using IVS. In doing so, HCOs need to manage the boundary between the internal operations of the IVCOs' organisations as well as the boundaries with their outside environment (Wallace and Kaplan, 2003; Igoe and Kelsall, 2005). However, these internal and external boundaries are not static but are permeable since the behaviours of individuals and organisations are shaped by trust and power relations which constrain or support the flow of knowledge (Clark et al., 2016). This framing of HCOs as boundary organisations/managers (Guston, 1999; Hanlin et al., 2018) reflects the critical and multiple challenges faced by HCOs in achieving consistency of aims, processes and outcomes in IVS.

## **1.2 Locating myself as the researcher**

The research originated from my own experience of working as an international volunteer after a long-standing career in the private sector, corporate management. Based in Ghana, West Africa and subsequently, in Guyana, South America, living and working as an international volunteer embedded in the local community offered many insights into the perspectives of the different

stakeholders in development interventions that engage international volunteers. I witnessed first-hand some of the administrative and personal challenges faced by staff working in HCOs. It was particularly significant that many of the same challenges to programme delivery experienced by host country staff in Ghana seemed to be faced in an entirely different country office, in a totally different geographical, political, social and economic context in Guyana. Moreover, social and professional contact with volunteers from other countries, as well as staff working for other IVCOs, and colleagues from partner organisations showed that these challenges were by no means exclusive to a specific IVCO or country, but were widely acknowledged by the diverse stakeholders of IVS. The challenges included uncertainties with regards to organisational priorities from head offices, high levels of inefficiency and wastage in programme resource management, lack of clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the host country staff, conflict among and between staff and volunteers, and high levels of staff and volunteer turnovers leading to incomplete or unsustainable programme outcomes.

Pursuing further contact with other international volunteers, and exploring academic and grey literature such as volunteer blogs and media reports revealed that my experiences were not unusual, even among those who had volunteered through different IVCOs from other countries in Europe, Asia, Australia and the USA. These findings and the subsequent years of working as an international volunteer, and with international volunteers from different IVCOs, raised questions for me with regards to the impact and effectiveness of international volunteering and why similar challenges are faced by HCOs regardless of location, time and context.

My research was also informed by both my personal and professional history. Having migrated from a country in the global South to one in the North at an early age, I had to learn to negotiate alien cultural traditions, societal norms and local power dynamics. Furthermore, my extensive experience of senior management in multi-national corporations provided me with valuable insight into organisational and human relations factors that influence congruity between policy and practice in decentralized organisations. Consideration, therefore, has been given in reflection to my

own role and points of view and how they may influence the collection and analysis of data. While recognizing that my role in this research cannot be value-free (Ritchie et al., 2003), I considered my choices of Malawi, and the IVCO organisations in a manner that optimised the use of my personal and professional insights to raise questions, while minimising potential bias from my preconceptions, and prior associations with particular cultures or organisations, during data collection and analysis. Throughout the stages of developing the research from the review of the literature to design of the fieldwork, data collection and analysis, reflexivity became an enabling tool to enhance my consciousness of the implications of my research and review them accordingly. Further detail on the reflexivity is given in Chapter 4.

### **1.3 Locating the research in the literature**

IVCOs are a sub-set of non-government organisations (NGOs)<sup>2</sup> that are involved in international development at global or community levels. They base their actions on humanitarian or development goals such as poverty alleviation, empowerment, and participation of marginalized people in poor countries (Daftary and Moore McBride, 2004; GIZ, 2016a; Peace Corps, 2016a; VSO International, 2016a). Consequently, IVCOs fall within the scope of development management literature which addresses the management of the processes of development in its diverse forms, at different international, national, organisational and community levels. However, IVCOs can be distinguished from other development organisations in their imperative to provide technical assistance for development projects, specifically through international volunteers. IVCOs are required not only to provide volunteers with a satisfactory experience but to contribute to development activities, at the same time as working with donors and partner organisations across international and cultural boundaries (Grusky, 2000).

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<sup>2</sup> The term NGO is restricted to independent non-government organisations but is used interchangeably with non-profit organisations in academic literature without making specific distinction between the different types of organisations. The term INGO applies to all NGOs that operate across multiple national boundaries. The distinction is blurred as many organisations, such as UN agencies, are non-profit-making while, conversely, NGOs require “considerably more finance than that which is spent on their supposed beneficiaries” for their organisational survival (Allen and Thomas, 2000a, p. 210). Consequently the terms NGO, and INGO, will be used in this thesis to include non-profit organisations consisting of IVCOs such as GIZ and UNV as a sub set.

Despite their critical role in the provision of volunteer services (Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2003; IVR, 2004; Sherraden et al., 2006, 2008; Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013), IVCOs are almost invisible in development management literature as an organisational form and have been chiefly overlooked by researchers of international volunteering (Musick and Wilson, 2008). Where IVCOs are mentioned, it is in the context of the volunteers' placements, experiences, or the impact of the volunteers' work (Jones, 2004; Sherraden et al., 2006; Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Lough, Sherraden and McBride, 2014; Ackers and Ackers-Johnson, 2017a). The dearth of literature on the role of IVCOs leaves a gap in knowledge that can only be answered through empirical evidence (Forsythe, 2011; Trau, 2014; Burns et al., 2015). Although a number of scholars have called for more detailed organisational analysis of IVCOs (Sherraden et al., 2006; Devereux, 2010; Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013), as Nelson and Child (2016, p. 453) observe, "Virtually no empirical scholarship has examined [IVCOs] specifically....and [IVCO organisations] have remained a black box". This research seeks to prise open the black box and examine what might be inside.

One possible explanation for this oversight may be assumptions by scholars of development management literature that, as a sub-set of INGOs, IVCOs can be included in the broader stream of the same academic discourse, although the absence of reference to IVCOs in the literature makes this potential explanation difficult to substantiate. While the inclusion of IVCOs in the wider development management literature can offer a degree of contextual insight, it can, at the same time, underplay the central role of IVCOs in the international volunteering arena and the unique challenges that they face. Working through international volunteers introduces additional challenges for IVCOs when compared with those faced by other development agencies. These challenges are concerned with assumptions and expectations of different stakeholders of programmes or projects, including the IVCO head offices and the volunteers, based on their perceptions and interpretations of what constitutes volunteering and voluntary action (Grube and Piliavin, 2000; Gaskin, 2003; Rochester et al., 2010; Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013).



Even more conspicuous is the absence of IVCO host country offices in NGO management literature. HCOs navigate the course of international volunteer engagements in the host country through formal and informal relations with a multitude of stakeholders with diverse interests, while simultaneously acting as the brokers for skills transfer and exchange between international volunteers and intended service recipients (GIZ, 2016a; Peace Corps, 2016a; UNV, 2016b; VSO International, 2016a). They are a critical element of an IVS process, but their work is complicated by the diverse range and number of actors, including their own head office and the volunteers with whom they interface in their day to day functions. Although relatively new scholarly works that specifically focus on relationships between HCOs and their parent organisation do exist in NGO management literature (Brunt and McCourt, 2012; Elbers, 2012; Walsh, 2014), they are very scarce and do not include any reference to IVCOs. Thus there is a gap in the literature on NGO management that addresses the role and influence of HCO as a distinct component within the processes and the practice of IVS. However, parts of the literature on multinational corporations (MNC)<sup>3</sup> examine trust and power in human relations between head offices and subsidiaries of international organisations. Therefore, elements of the literature on MNCs that deal with influential factors in the negotiation of relationships between HCOs and their head offices are used in this thesis to address some of the shortfalls in the literature on NGO management.

The literature on boundary organisations offers an intersection with the literature on MNCs, where the relationships between head offices and their subsidiaries resemble one of the ‘social worlds’<sup>4</sup> that HCOs straddle. For example, the internal IVCO organisation represents one world, while the institutional landscape of development in the host country can represent the other. Guston (1999) offers insights into organisations that have multiple mandates and that function as intermediaries between diverse stakeholders (Hanlin et al., 2018). Although this literature does not typically look

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<sup>3</sup> The abbreviation ‘MNC’ is used interchangeably with MNE (Multi-national Enterprises) in academic literature but will be used exclusively in this thesis, representing both terms.

<sup>4</sup> Strauss (1978, 1984) describes a social world as an interactive unit that arises when a number of individuals strive to act in a collective way, often requiring the coordination of separate perspectives and the sharing of resources. Membership in a social world is therefore determined by the limits of effective communication rather than by geography or formal structure.

at IVCOs (see Chapter 2, section 2.6), it is important because it helps explain the role of the HCOs and the relationships they have to negotiate.

It is uncommon to find literature on development management that does not include references or analysis of different forms, spaces, levels, and dynamics of power among the stakeholders (Fowler, 2002; Mawdsley et al., 2005; Cornwall, 2007; Elbers, 2012; Lewis, 2014). However, scholarly work that specifically recognizes the importance of trust, and the interplay between trust and power as potentially influential elements in intra- and inter-organisational relationships among the actors in development management is sparse. The tendency in development management literature is to draw on other academic disciplines including new public management (Mawdsley et al., 2005), project management literature (Diallo and Thuillier, 2005), inter-organisational relationships and cross-border alliances (Li, 2005). Framing HCOs as boundary managers that straddle multiple social worlds is useful in understanding the challenges that HCOs face in negotiating both their intra- and inter-organisational relationships.

HCOs are also absent in the literature on volunteer management, and the bulk of that literature tends to focus primarily on volunteers working in their own countries (Juknevičius and Savicka, 2003; Voicu and Voicu, 2003; Machin and Paine, 2008; Oppenheimer, 2008; Jakimow, 2010). While the theoretical basis for applying the insights from domestic to international volunteer management may highlight similarities, empirical study of issues related to managing international volunteers by HCOs has been relatively limited. Such work as exists in an international context has focused on data drawn on the INGO sector where foreign and national employees work alongside each other and with other foreigners such as consultants and general experts (Fowler, 1997; Pink, 1998; Porter, 2003; Crewe and Fernando, 2006) and does not specifically address the management of foreign volunteers. Consequently, there is a gap in the knowledge of the role of HCOs in the management of international volunteers, as well as the challenges that they face in the management of development programmes that use these volunteers.

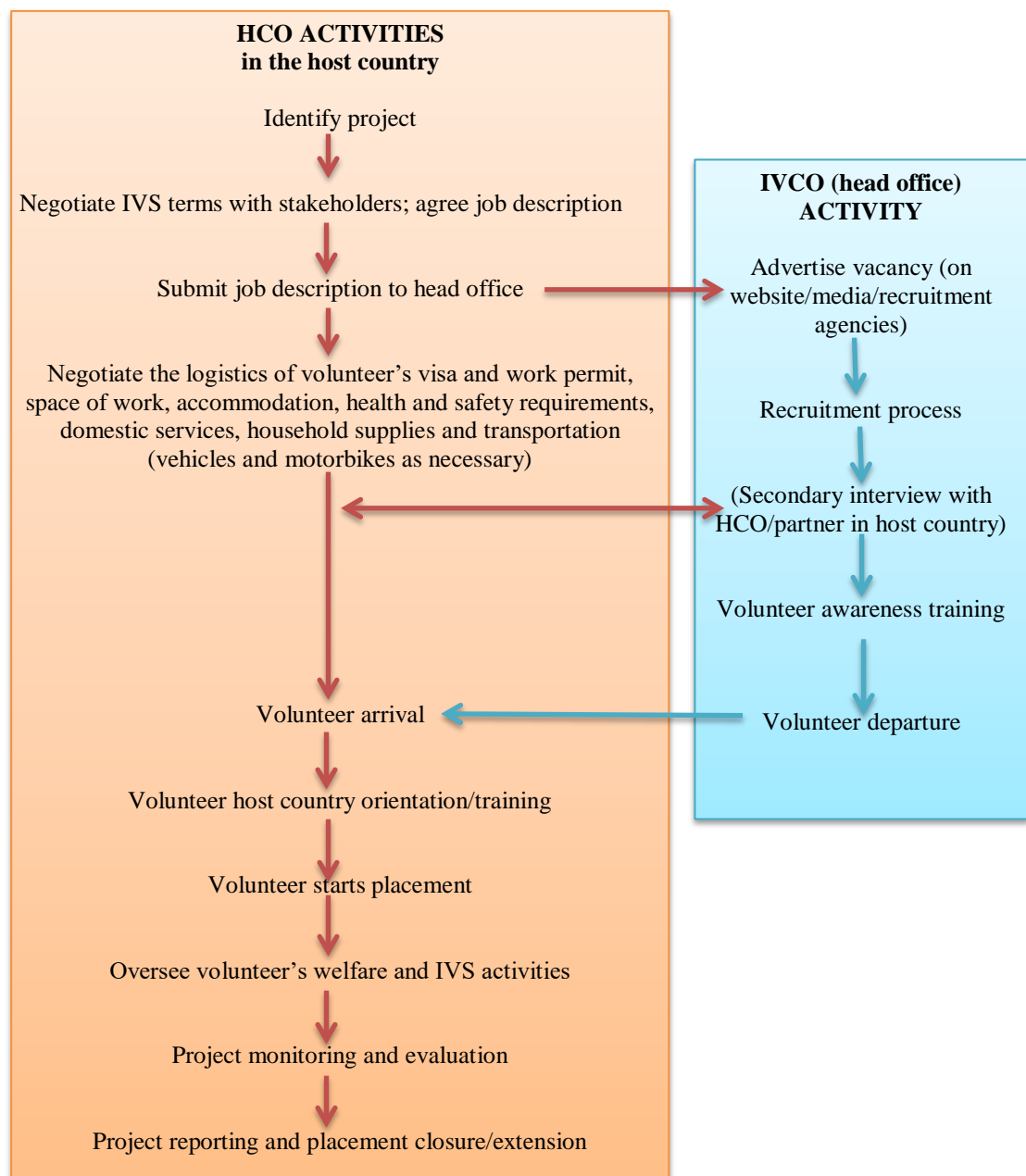
Chapter 2 provides key contributions from the literature on development management and NGO management. The literature is supplemented with relevant parts of the literature on MNCs and on boundary organisations that add to the understanding of development management as a multi-actor terrain and identify the gaps in the literature in respect of HCO relationships with the head offices and their other IVS stakeholders. A brief review of the appropriate parts of the literature on volunteer management is also provided in Chapter 2, which looks at the relevance and shortfalls of this literature in respect of IVS. Chapter 3 looks more specifically at the literature on negotiation, trust and power in human relations that add insight to the literature on development management, NGO management and volunteer management, when considering how relationships are negotiated between HCOs and their IVS stakeholders.

## **1.4 The role of host country offices**

The activities leading to IVS placements in development programmes fall within the remit of the HCOs. HCOs' work involves not only the justification of IVS within a development project and recruitment of international volunteers, but the provision of personal support (accommodation, living allowances, basic needs and services, and health and safety), as well as professional support (administration, resources, logistics of travel) for the volunteers during their stay. At the same time, they have to maintain an overview of the projects' development mandate until, and subsequent to, the departure of the volunteers.

The activities of IVS are similar in principle among IVCOs, although they may vary in specific operational mechanisms. Figure 1 is a generalised representation of typical steps involved in setting up an IVS placement and shows the division of activities that take place both within and outside the host country by HCOs and IVCO head offices respectively. Although exceptions to the listed activities do occur, they are extremely rare and do not represent customary practices. What is not shown in the diagram is the impact of time. Engaging a volunteer can take many months and span a recruitment drive across several countries to find a candidate with the necessary mix of skills and

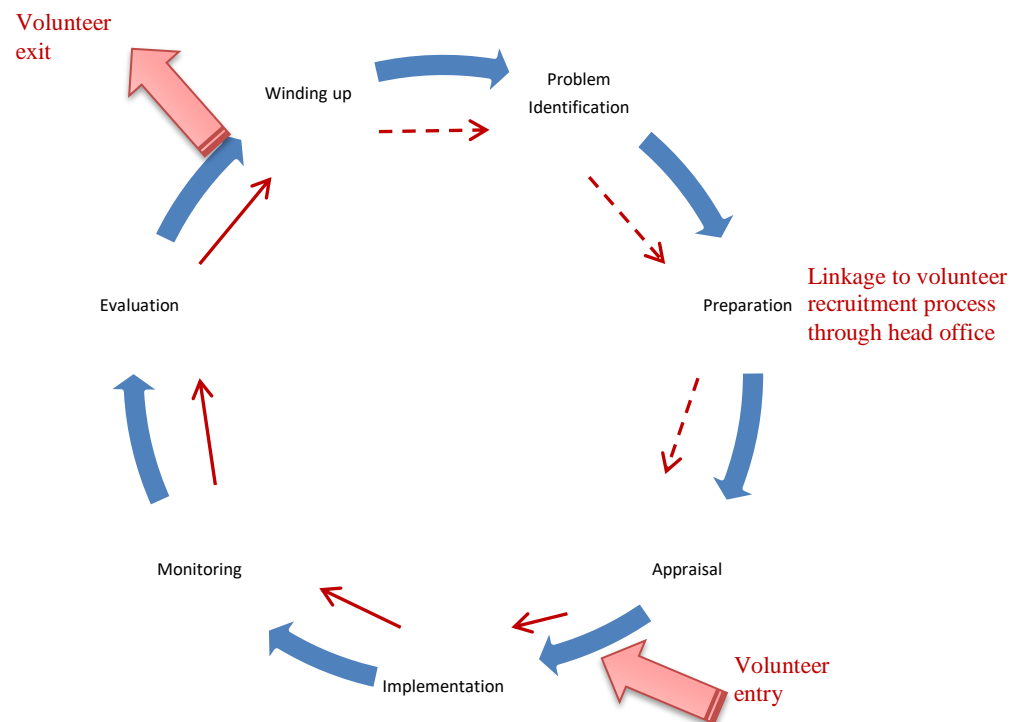
experiences who is willing and able to travel, live and work in the host country for the required period.



**Figure 1:** A generalised representation of the typical processes involved in setting up an IVS placement (Source: author)

It is widely acknowledged in NGO literature that management of development projects follows a series of steps, commonly referred to as a project cycle through which programmes need to be evaluated, and success and failure factors identified, prior to moving to the next steps (Biggs and Neame, 1996; European Commission, 2004; Fengler and Kharas, 2011; Akampurira, 2014). A typical example of a development project cycle is provided by Akampurira (2014) and represented

in Figure 2 below. It is applicable to the type of project cycle that HCOs engage with, starting at problem identification. The diagram is adapted to show how IVS is incorporated in the project cycle.

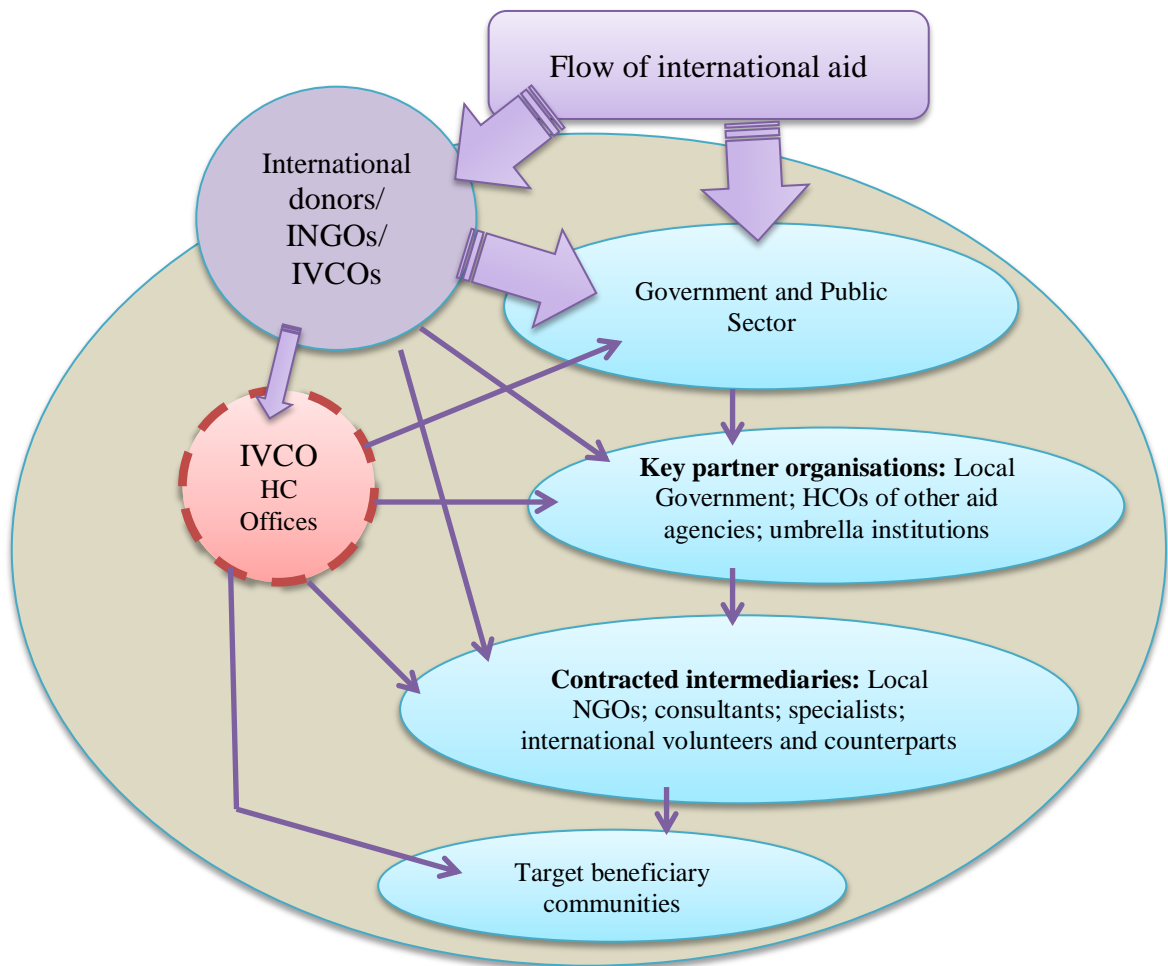


**Figure 2** A typical cycle for a development project showing the incorporation of IVS (Source: adapted by the author from Akampurira (2014, p. 1))

A development project can be described as a time-bound series of activities with measurable costs aimed at delivering assistance and the prospect of future benefits for targeted groups or communities (Cleaver, 2002; Akampurira, 2014); it can be a single funded initiative or a component of development programme divided into multiple funded projects (Fowler, 1997).

As representatives of an international organisation in the host country, HCOs' staff are expected to have the necessary levels of local knowledge, professional expertise, resources, and networks to deliver the organisational mandate of the IVCO in alignment with the host country strategies for development (Raleigh International, 2015; GIZ, 2016; Peace Corps, 2016; UNV, 2016; VSO International, 2016b). The incorporation of IVS within development projects is subject to negotiation with a range of diverse partner organisations for which IVS may not be a priority.

Figure 3 below is a generalised representation of the arena for development activity in a developing country such as Malawi and the types and categories of IVS stakeholders.



**Figure 3:** A generalised representation of the arena for IVCO activity in a developing country (Source: author)

In this diagram, the country context is the largest oval shape and shows features that exist outside the country or have connections within the country. The flow of international aid (funding or other forms of technical assistance) is denoted by arrows, loosely weighted according to the quantity of flow in Malawi. HCOs are shown as a dashed circle as they are the key focus of this research.

Figure 3 illustrates the range and diversity of stakeholders that HCOs negotiate relationships within their day to day activities. How HCOs negotiate these relationships ultimately shapes the processes of IVS. This thesis aims to analyse how relations of trust and power are likely to influence what happens between the HCOs, their parent organisation, donors and other stakeholders, including

how they negotiate matters relating to IVS placements.

## 1.5 Research question and objectives

This thesis sets out to examine how relationships are negotiated between IVCO host country offices and the stakeholders in IVS programmes by focusing on the roles of trust and power in analysing how these relationships are negotiated. In doing so, the research seeks to develop a better understanding of how the relationships between the HCOs as boundary managers, and their IVS stakeholders, influence the aims and processes of IVS and its contribution to development programmes and projects. As such, the central research question of this thesis is:

*How do host country offices negotiate the multiple and diverse relationships involved in setting up and overseeing international volunteering service in development projects?*

This thesis examines this question by investigating how the host country offices of the five selected IVCOs in Malawi (UNV, GIZ, VSO, The Peace Corps, and Progressio) work with other stakeholders and the role of trust and power in shaping these relationships. Using the HCOs as the unit of analysis, the primary objective of this research is to better understand their role and function in the processes of development through international volunteering. Looking at the types of IVS stakeholders with whom HCOs have to negotiate relationships in their day to day work, and disaggregating these relationships, facilitates the appreciation of factors that support or constrain the negotiation of each of the relationships. In doing so, the research adds to development management and NGO management literature by drawing on relevant literature on MNCs and boundary organisations.

A secondary objective is to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of the different relationships between the HCOs and their stakeholders. It does so by examining the types of trust and power relations as key influential elements that constrain or support the flow of knowledge, and hence, shape the behaviours of people and organisations in negotiating relationships. Three categories of key stakeholders were identified during the fieldwork in accordance with the main focus of the data

analysis, based on the patterns of interaction, and the level at which these relationships are negotiated:

- i) The international volunteers,
- ii) Their IVCO head offices, and
- iii) The other stakeholders such as partner organisations, government and international funding agencies.

Table 1, below, presents a snapshot of key information about the five IVCOs studied in this research (Progressio, 2016c; GIZ, 2018b; The Peace Corps, 2018; UNV, 2018; VSO International, 2018a). More detailed information is provided in Appendix 1, A-E, obtained from their websites at the time of fieldwork.

Organisation; year established	HQ and number of countries	Governance	Host country administration	Source(s) of funding
The United Nations Volunteers UNV <b>Est. 1970</b>	Bonn, Germany.  130 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Coordinator of the UNV programme.</li> <li>• Reports to the UNDP Executive Board.</li> </ul>	UNV Programme Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works through UNDP offices.</li> <li>• Is not part of UN Country Team but has access, and provides reports, to the UNCT</li> <li>• Attends the UNDP management meeting</li> </ul>	83% United Nations Entities 9% UNV Resources 8% Institutional Resources
Peace Corps <b>Est. 1961</b>	Washington DC, USA  Currently 60 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent agency within the executive branch of the US government.</li> <li>• The Director appointed by the President of the United States</li> <li>• Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace Corps posts around the world are managed in three regions overseen by the Office of Global Operations.</li> <li>• Host country office managed by Country Director and senior staff are Americans.</li> </ul>	The annual budget is determined each year by the US Congress
GIZ <b>Est. 1963</b> (as DED)	Bonn, Germany  130 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered as a non-profit, public limited enterprise (GmbH) in Germany;</li> <li>• It has a Management Board; shareholders, and a Supervisory Board; a Board of Trustees and a Private Sector Advisory Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIZ posts around the world are managed in regional sections overseen by the Heads of different Geographical Department</li> <li>• Host country office managed by Country Director and 70% of the total number of staff in countries are German or European.</li> </ul>	In 2015, 92% German Government. 8% was other international donors (Hilger & Dyckerhoff, 2016)
VSO International <b>Est. 1958</b>	London, UK  24 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governed by the International Board and Executive Board</li> <li>• The CEO heads a management team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operates through a series of international fundraising and recruitment hubs and programme offices in developing countries.</li> <li>• Host country offices are managed by a Country Director and a mixture of national and some international staff.</li> </ul>	22% DfID ( 51% Other Government income 22% from charitable income;
Progressio* <b>Est. 1940</b> as Sword of the Spirit	London, UK  7 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressio is governed by a board of trustees</li> <li>• The CEO heads a management team.</li> </ul>	Host country offices managed by the Country Director and management staff.	35% from DfID 39% from VSO 26% from other sources

**Table 1:** Key background information for the IVCOs in this study (Source: author)

\*On 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016, Progressio began proceedings to close, and closure was finalized at the end of March 2017



## 1.6 Chapter structure

The thesis is structured as follows:

**Chapter 2** argues that there is a gap in the literature that recognises the role of HCOs as key actors in development interventions through IVS. The chapter critically reviews the literature on international development and international volunteering, showing that both development and volunteering are contested concepts in literary discourse. It reveals how international and national political and economic histories have shaped power relations among developed and developing countries. The chapter moves on to describe the rise of IVCOs in the landscape of international development before turning to the literature on development management to explore overlaps and gaps with the literature on international volunteering. Next, the chapter examines the literature on NGO management, which is the arena in which IVCOs operate. Relevant parts of the literature on MNCs and boundary organisations are introduced to help explain the challenges of the multiple relationships that HCOs have to negotiate and add conceptual and empirical insight where shortfalls are identified in the literature on NGO management. Finally, the chapter examines the literature that describes the proliferation of terminology and ambiguities in the perceptions of volunteering as applied to IVS, then looks at volunteer management and its contributions and shortfalls in relation to the management of international volunteers. The chapter concludes by providing a summary of its findings.

**Chapter 3** argues that the negotiation of relationships in multi-stakeholder situations are influenced by different factors of which knowledge sharing is a critical element in shaping, and being shaped by, the interplay between different types of trust and power relations among the actors. The chapter provides an overview of the literature on negotiation and its relevance and importance in the context of development management. While the current literature on this subject has recognised differences in histories, cultural norms and language as influential elements in negotiation, it has chiefly focused on power relations, trust and symmetry of knowledge sharing as significant factors that influence the way relationships are negotiated. The chapter moves on to explain how different

forms of trust are linked to the central argument of this thesis concerning how relationships are negotiated between HCOs and the IVS stakeholders. It introduces Zucker's (1986) categorisation of characteristic-based, process-based and institutional trust (Chapter 3, section 3.3) that are used in the analysis of data for this research. This section illustrates how each type of trust can influence relationships depending on whether trust between the actors is based on positive or negative experiences of past interactions, or based on assumptions or characteristics which may or may not be true. Next, the chapter provides a brief appraisal of the extensive literature on types of power and explains the role of power in negotiating relationships between stakeholders in IVS. Using Elgström's (1992, pp. 22–24) "essential dimensions of power in negotiating processes" as a guide, it looks at the distribution of power over material (for example, funding, transportation and equipment) and non-material resources (for example knowledge and language), and power to influence in the negotiation of relationships between the HCOs and the IVS stakeholders. The chapter then wraps the preceding sections together to present the conceptual framework for the thesis before providing a summary of the literature and concluding remarks.

**Chapter 4** defines the scope of the research and the rationale behind the methodology used to gather and analyse data. This chapter explains how the research was designed to focus on five IVCOs using Malawi as the contextual background. The chapter also describes the processes used for the selection of the five IVCOs and for choosing Malawi as the host country. The methods chosen for data collection (fieldwork, semi-structured interviews, observations and document review alongside field notes and data transcriptions) are explained in this chapter and are followed by a discussion of the challenges, dilemmas and ethical considerations in at the time of preparation, during and after the fieldwork. Ethical considerations included permissions for conducting research, informed consent and confidentiality afforded to participants, as well as reflections on my own identity and role as a researcher and past international volunteer. Finally, the chapter explains the approach taken for data analysis which includes how the theoretical discussion was used within the process of data analysis, and how problems of validity and reliability in this research, particularly those associated with my personal position, were addressed.

**Chapter 5** is the first of three chapters that analyse the data collected as part of this research. The focus of this chapter is on the relationships between the HCOs and the volunteers in Malawi; therefore it takes a bird's eye view of the HCOs' relationships with other stakeholders (such as partner organisations and beneficiary groups) which are analysed in-depth in Chapter 7. Chapter 5 argues that the negotiation of the relationships between the HCOs' staff and the volunteers is influenced by the diversity of perspectives on volunteering, the organisational focus of the IVCO and the contrasting expectations of the professional, personal and administrative support that HCOs can provide for the volunteers. The chapter shows that geographical and cultural barriers, and ambiguities in IVS terminology, make building process-based trust between the HCOs staff, the volunteers and their co-workers problematic. This has led to reliance on institutional or characteristic-based types of trust, and assumptions of power over resources and power to influence, that HCOs, as boundary managers, need to mediate. The relationships between the HCOs' staff and the volunteers are influenced by whether the primary organisational focus of an IVCO is on development or volunteer placement. These two different types of organisational focus affect the approach the HCOs take to the identification, justification, planning and incorporation of IVS placements in development projects, and how information is exchanged between the HCOs, the volunteers and their co-workers in partner organisations. While an IVCO's development-focus can support the HCOs' ability to provide volunteers with professional and personal support, a placement-focus often constrains this HCO ability and can lead to problems in managing the volunteers' expectations and retention. Successful management of relationships helps build process-based trust between the HCOs' staff and the volunteers, while poorly managed relationships can result in mistrust and disappointment of volunteers and lead to volunteers complaining, working independently or leaving; all of which have serious implications for the HCO and the IVS.

**Chapter 6** looks at the way IVCO formal and informal structures and procedures support or constrain relationships between HCOs and their head offices. The chapter argues that discrepancies

exist between how the role of HCOs is described by the IVCOs and how it is experienced and enacted by the HCOs. These discrepancies are related to the original aim of IVCO organisations when they were established, as well as current and historical changes to power relations within IVCO organisations, in response to external and internal influences. The ability of an IVCO to respond to emerging global trends is directed by the types of information that it considers important for it to continue functioning and how external information is interpreted into internal policies and procedures. The chapter makes a distinction between development-focused and placement-focused IVCOs with the former having evolved to be more adaptable to change and a more positive relationship between the HCO and their head offices, whereas the latter has struggled to respond to changes that have added complexity to historical power relations and diminished institutional trust. Drawing parallels between NGO management literature, the literature on MNCs and on boundary organisations, the chapter shows that organisational structures and the language used to convey the policies, as well as opportunities and spaces available for knowledge sharing, participation in democratic processes, and the way management makes and enacts decisions affecting its own staff influence the day to day operations of the HCOs. As boundary managers, HCOs also have to negotiate relationships with other actors outside the IVCO; consequently, the incorporation of HCOs into the IVCOs' overall strategy is not always as seamless as it is portrayed. Finally, the chapter looks at the extent to which IVCOs' espoused principles and values are reflected not only in the quantity of the provision of resources to HCOs but to transparency and mechanisms for resource allocations within the wider organisation. It shows that power over resources and generation of process-based trust between the head offices and HCOs reflect the levels of IVCOs' commitment to staff training and development and fair remuneration packages.

**Chapter 7** examines the boundaries that HCOs have to manage across three different kinds of inter-organisational relationships, described in this thesis as strategic, mobilising and implementing partnerships (see Chapter 7, section 7.1). It argues that contextual factors in the institutional landscape of development in Malawi influence the dynamics of trust and power relations between the HCOs and their three types of partners in Malawi. As boundary managers, HCOs'

accountability to multiple partners makes building process-based trust problematic. This is illustrated by the changes in the dynamics of institutional and characteristic-based types of trust, and the distribution of power over financial resources between the donor agencies and the INGO (including IVCO) host country offices as a result of a history of financial irregularities and capacity issues in the Government of Malawi.

The HCOs' multiple accountabilities blur the distinctions between not only what is being accounted for, but to whom it should be accounted. Thus HCOs can act as gate-keepers of knowledge and information exchange between their three sets of partnerships and, in doing so, they are guided by whether their organisational focus is on development or placement of volunteers. The inclusion of IVS in development programmes cannot be assumed and has to be justified when negotiating relationships with mobilising partners, for whom IVS may not be a priority, and hence HCOs sometimes construct or inflate the expectations on which institutional and characteristic-based of their partners are grounded. The chapter shows that unlike development-focused HCOs for which IVS is one of many tools for development intervention, failure to secure IVS placements presents a bigger risk for placement-focused HCOs whose organisational survival depends entirely on placing volunteers. While a development-focused approach usually leads to an IVS placement requested by a partner organisation, a placement-focused approach relies on an offer of IVS being accepted by a partner organisation. Thus Malawian partners often consent to the power of the placement-focused HCOs over resources on offer through IVS, for reasons that are sometimes different from the aims of IVS and can impact its aims and processes. Six reasons are identified: i) cultural norms in Malawi, ii) financial benefits for the Malawian partner, iii) issues related to human resources, iv) increased access to materials and equipment, v) the transience of relationships and vi) reputation and prestige. The chapter shows that a lack of an HCO's responsiveness to contextual changes in the host country and persistence in promoting IVS, constrain the relationships between the HCOs and their implementing partners. This diminishes institutional trust in IVS and characteristic-based trust of HCOs, sometimes reinforcing internalised inequalities

associated with historical or economic supremacy and adversely impacting on knowledge exchange.

**Chapter 8** presents a discussion of the main empirical findings of this study and shows how they contribute to and move forward, the existing understanding of the role of HCOs in international volunteering, starting with a summary of the key findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7. This research represents an initial effort to open the ‘black box’ that allows further exploration of the organisational factors that the impact of IVS and its contribution to empirical, theoretical and policy are presented in this chapter. Separating of relationships from the functional dimensions of HCOs’ work, and analysing them independently, has revealed the importance of human factors that add to the understanding of development through IVS. The contribution of the research to theory is set out in terms of addressing the gap in the literature on development management, NGO management and volunteer management, by linking them to the literature on MNCs and on boundary organisations. In policy terms, the research recognises the importance of intra-organisational strategies, policies and procedures that promote building process-based trust, democratic spaces for participation and openness in knowledge sharing.

The chapter revisits the theoretical framework used in this thesis to discuss how it supported the analysis of data, and its limitations in exploring the range and depth of influential elements in negotiating relationships between HCOs and their stakeholders. The chapter then brings together the preceding sections to answer the overarching research question and present the overall conclusion of this thesis. It concludes that HCOs, as boundary managers, act as gatekeepers of useful knowledge and information among the IVS stakeholders. This is because the diversity of the stakeholder and multi-national setting of development interventions through IVS create a dynamic environment where changes in power relations make it difficult for HCOs, to build and maintain process-based trust among the stakeholders. This opens opportunities and spaces for IVS actors, including HCOs to pursue self-serving agendas, which may have positive or negative consequences for IVS. The chapter then turns to suggestions for possible further research that could be conducted

to confirm and expand the findings of this project. Recommendations include a more in-depth exploration of the role of HCOs as boundary managers with particular emphasis on knowledge sharing and information exchange; the study of the relationships between host country employees and employed foreign staff in the same organisation; evaluation of the policy and practice of South-South volunteering as well as of national volunteering by IVCOs, and the potential for ‘reciprocity’ in IVS (involving IVS placement for host country nationals in the home country of the IVCO head offices).

## Chapter 2

### Looking for the ‘Black Box’: IVCOs and Their Place in the Literature

#### 2.1 Introduction

International volunteering has witnessed significant expansion since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century and has subsequently become the focus of considerable scholarly attention (Anheier and Salamon, 1999; Simpson, 2004; Sherraden et al., 2006, 2008; Jones, 2008; Devereux, 2010; Boesten et al., 2011; Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Burns et al., 2015; Nelson and Child, 2016; Ackers and Ackers-Johnson, 2017a). Technological advances in communications, easier access to overseas travel, and increased knowledge of the conditions in the poorest countries of the global South have stimulated the growth of volunteer-based programmes and enabled linkages to emerging concepts such as those of global citizenship (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011), awareness-development in youths (Grusky, 2000; Dwyer, 2004), and mutually beneficial cultural exchanges (Lewis, 2005; Devereux, 2010; Burns et al., 2015). On the other hand, IVS is rooted in colonial histories (Perold et al., 2013), global politics (Grubbs, 2009), and neoliberal economic structures of international aid and development processes (Engel and Georgeou, 2011). Consequently, it can also be considered as “patronising, self-serving and exploitative” (Schech et al., 2015, p. 359). Although there is a wealth of literature on international volunteering, the tendency in scholarly literature is to focus on international volunteers when seeking to attribute the positive or negative impacts of IVS practice. Scholarly work on the organisational elements of IVS is sparse (Sherraden et al., 2006; Nelson and Child, 2016) and there is little or no focus on the role of the host country offices of the IVCOs which are crucial in determining projects and placements for volunteers.

This chapter argues that there is a gap in the literature that recognises the role of HCOs as key actors in development interventions through IVS and limits the understanding of IVS in practice. It examines the key literature on international volunteering and its connection with development management as well as the literature on NGO management and volunteer management. It shows



that while much has been written about the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of international volunteering, the literature on the ‘how’ – the processes of IVS – is relatively light. The scarcity of academic research on how IVS processes are organised suggests both a lack of awareness of the multiple relationships that IVCOs have to manage and an understanding of the division of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities between IVCO head offices and their HCOs.

**Section 2.2** starts by looking at the key contextual insights from the literature on international development and international volunteering, highlighting historical, institutional and relational perspectives on development intervention through IVS. The section seeks to identify overlaps and gaps between the evolving perspectives of international development and international volunteering. It shows that despite over sixty years having passed since the inception of the contemporary forms of international volunteering, many of its weaknesses that are identified in the literature remain unchanged, as IVCOs struggle to put into practice measures that resolve the challenges that they face in managing IVS.

**Section 2.3** reviews academic discourse on development management and identifies its contribution to this research as well as gaps in the literature in respect of the role and function of IVS. This section argues that issues raised in the development management literature on inter-organisational relationships between the global North and South, also have implications for IVS.

**Section 2.4** turns to the literature on NGO management and examines its applicability to IVCOs as a subset of INGOs. The section argues that there is a gap in the literature on NGO management that fails to make a distinction between the role and functions of INGOs’ (and IVCOs’) central offices and their HCOs, and thus does not address the role and influence of HCOs as a distinct component within the processes and the practices of IVS. Although the literature on NGO management distinguishes between NGOs, INGOs and even NGDOs<sup>5</sup>, it refers to the latter two when, in fact, it is describing the work of their host country offices in a developing country. This creates the

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<sup>5</sup> NGDO is the term used by Fowler (1997) and by Edwards and Fowler (2002) to describe non-government development organisation, of which IVCOs are a sub-set.

impression of seamless accord between INGO aims, policy and practice - its head office and the HCO - that may not reflect the realities on the ground.

**Section 2.5** provides a summary of the relevant parts of the literature on MNCs that examine how relations between head offices and subsidiaries of international organisations are informed by trust and power. This literature provides insights into how IVCO-HCO relations may function and how HCO roles might be integrated within the wider parent organisations. Overlaying elements of the literature on MNCs that deal with influential factors in the negotiation of relationships between HCOs and their head offices, this section explores the tensions arising in the relationships between geographically and culturally diverse central offices and HCOs in international organisations. Drawing on the literature on MNCs, allows this research to explore the extent to which the internal dynamics within IVCOs are related to disparity in shared values, unequal power relations, and assumptions and expectations based on degrees of trust between the two organisational units.

**Section 2.6** Looks at the literature on boundary organisations (Guston, 1999) for insights into organisations that have multiple mandates and accountabilities (Hanlin et al., 2018). Although this literature does not typically look at IVCOs, it is important because it helps explain the relationships HCOs have to negotiate with other key IVS stakeholders (donors, state departments, partner organisations, beneficiary groups and volunteers). Framing HCOs as boundary managers that straddle two (or more) social worlds - one being the internal IVCO organisation and the other the institutional landscape of development in the host country - and are accountable to both, is useful in understanding the challenges that HCOs face in negotiating several relationships with diverse stakeholders.

**Section 2.7** discusses key literature on volunteer management and its overlaps and shortfalls in relation to the management of people who undertake volunteer work outside their home country, in IVS programmes and projects. It argues that there is a gap in the knowledge of the role of HCOs in the management and coordination of international volunteers in IVS. The bulk of the literature on

volunteer management tends to focus primarily on volunteers working in their own countries (Juknevičius and Savicka, 2003; Voicu and Voicu, 2003; Machin and Paine, 2008; Oppenheimer, 2008). Such work as exists in an international context has focused on data drawn on the INGO sector where foreign and national employees work alongside each other and with other foreigners such as consultants and ‘generalist experts’ (Fowler, 1997; Pink, 1998; Porter, 2003; Crewe and Fernando, 2006) and does not specifically address the management of foreign volunteers.

**Section 2.8** concludes the chapter by providing a summary of its findings.

## **2.2 Evolving perspectives on international volunteering in development**

This section looks at relevant literature on international development and examines how shifting views in international development have also shaped the discourse on international volunteering. It argues that global trends in international development also impact on international volunteering and its subsequent role in development interventions. This section reinforces the view that IVS is an activity grounded in Western philosophies, history and culture (Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Kothari, 2005; Grubbs, 2009; Perold et al., 2013) and “plays a legitimating role in the donor/state/NGO international aid system” (Engel and Georgeou, 2011, p. 298). However, while the literature on international volunteering recognises the importance of organisational factors in the aims and processes of IVS, it largely focuses on the values of volunteering and the (positive or negative) contribution of volunteers.

The historical origins of international volunteering can be traced back to the expansion of European colonialism and the activities of religious missionaries (Beigbeder, 1991; Ross, 2013) and their contested role either as political agents of imperial powers, or advocates of justice for the indigenous people against the tyrannies of colonialism (Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995; Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Thomas, 2000). What constitutes the modern approach to international

volunteering<sup>6</sup> emerged following the two world wars when a number of independent organisations were set up with the aim of facilitating the placement of volunteers from the developed countries in programmes addressing basic needs issues of impoverished people in countries of the South (Beigbeder, 1991). Voluntary Services Overseas, VSO (the UK, 1957), Peace Corps (the USA, 1961), Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, JOVC (1965), and United Nations Volunteers, UNV (1971) are among many such organisations that were set up at this time (Sherraden et al., 2006). Following the collapse of the structuralist approach to development by the 1980s, and the subsequent failure of neoliberal economic policies to deliver the promised development goals in the 1990 - 2000s, it became apparent that development did not translate into a shift in the balance of power between the North and the South (Hewitt, 2000; Kothari, 2005). Moreover, it highlighted that neither the state nor the market could reliably oversee development in the interest of the poor<sup>7</sup>. This facilitated the proliferation of a variety of agencies, including NGOs and INGOs (Lewis, 2002) - and IVCOs as a subset of INGOs - occupying the space created between the 'state' and the 'market' and engaging in the development of others.

The post-war discourse on development policy and practice stimulated an international effort to facilitate the economic growth of poor countries through internationally coordinated financial support, based on assumptions that the benefits would subsequently trickle down to the rest of the population (Hewitt, 2000). Some of the new initiatives, such as overseas development programmes in Europe, America and Australia (Hewitt, 2000, p. 291), recognised the potential values of volunteering as complementary to the emerging aspirations for development in poor countries. For example, the Commonwealth government assistance for international voluntary aid organisations in the 1960s led to the growth in the number of volunteers from Western countries participating in development programmes in countries of the South (Oppenheimer, 2008). However, given their

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<sup>6</sup> Beigbeder (1991, p. 9) describes 'modern forms of voluntary service' as both secular and religious activities that require "the analysis of economic, social and human reality as a basis for a strategy to eliminate the causes of alienation, [and] create the conditions for the underprivileged to take charge of their own destiny.", and are distinct from benevolence and charity which only deal with the symptoms of problems.

<sup>7</sup> Historically, states acted as agents for development (Allen and Thomas, 2000b, p. 193), but the severe control exercised by states was contested, through the emergence of "ideas of liberal market economy unimpeded by interference from the state" (Brown and Hanlin, 2013b, p. 36) that later developed into the neoliberal economic approach in the 1980s' (Brown & Hanlin, 2013b). Proponents of neoliberalism believe that the freedom of trade and competition within the market will generate overall wealth for the society which will eventually trickle down to all members (Brown and Hanlin, 2013b, p. 36).

recent colonial experiences, many of the earliest volunteer-hosting countries were suspicious of the intentions of the sending countries (Ball et al., 1976; Bird, 1998; Amin, 1999), but had to acknowledge that their nation's economic and social development would be dependent on revenue, resources and skills from overseas (Grubbs, 2009).

Diverse perspectives on international development are also reflected in the literature on IVS.

Advocates of international volunteering consider its values as both the transfer of skills, knowledge and resources, and the promotion of concepts such as cultural exchange, international understanding, and solidarity (Brown, 1999; Lewis, 2005; Devereux, 2010; Lough, 2011; Burns et al., 2015; Schech et al., 2015). Critics of international volunteering argue that empirical evidence from volunteers and beneficiary groups (Appadurai, 1988; Heron, 2005; Noxolo, 2011; Trau, 2014) points to gaps between the theory and practice of IVS, and speculate on possible forms of IVS that may be constructed in an environment of inherent inequality as a consequence of residual colonial history or neo-liberal economics (Simpson, 2004; Forsythe, 2011; Perold et al., 2013; Trau, 2014).

These gaps in theory and practice have persisted over time. The 1976 International Conference on Volunteer Service, Vienna, is an example of sustained unequal power relations in IVS processes between the volunteer sending and volunteer receiving countries. The summary report from the conference shows a disparity between the goals and values of the volunteer-exporting and volunteer-receiving countries within any given project (Ball et al., 1976, p. 30). While developing countries aimed to supplement their technical skills, the goals for the export country appeared to be providing “experience to the volunteer in a foreign setting” (Ball et al., 1976, p. 30). Almost forty years later, a similar discrepancy is reported by Burns et al. (2015, pp. 38–39) who observe that although IVCOs are “delivering quality work, they are not necessarily delivering what communities need.” The report from the Vienna conference also showed that the need for technical assistance from foreign volunteers was already becoming redundant due to the growing number of skilled professional in host countries, with representatives proposing the introduction of reciprocal schemes based on exchange of volunteers (Ball et al., 1976, pp. 29–30). Nearly forty years later,

research conducted by Lough and Carter-Black (2015, p. 219) echoes the voices of participants from 1976 by concluding that reciprocity of international exchange and culturally immersive relationships would redress the real or perceived power of the white (Western) volunteers “which tend to result in a comparative denigration of indigenous ideas and practices.”

The findings of Lough and Carter-Black (2015) and Burns et al. (2015) suggest a lack of sensitivity to contextual changes in the host-countries and the needs of the intended beneficiaries, as well as persistence in the promotion of the interests of the volunteer-sending countries in IVS policy and practice. This sustained lack of responsiveness implies enduring unequal power relations between the volunteer sending agencies and the volunteer receiving countries which stem from the early days of IVS over sixty years ago, continue through the course of its evolution, and remain unresolved to the present day. Although unequal power relations are recognised in the literature on international volunteering (Simpson, 2004, 2005; Perold et al., 2013; Trau, 2014; Lough and Carter-Black, 2015), they are focused largely on the relationships between the volunteers and the beneficiary groups and the values and principles of volunteering. Little attention is given to research that focuses on the organisational processes that contribute to IVS in practice, and are triggered by the way relationships are negotiated between HCOs and the other IVS actors. The next section turns to the contribution and limits of development management literature in explaining some of the challenges in IVS.

### **2.3 Development management, changing patterns of aid and implications for IVS**

Development management addresses the management of the processes of development in its diverse forms, at different international, national, organisational and community levels. As an integral but distinct constituent of international development, issues raised in the development management literature on inter-organisational relationships between the global North and South, also have implications for IVS. IVCOs are subject to external pressures arising from global trends

in international development, worldwide political and economic movements, as well as domestic concerns in the countries where IVCO host country offices operate.

Development is an imprecise and contested issue (Chambers, 1983; Crush, 1995; Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Biekart, 1999; Allen and Thomas, 2000b; Cleaver, 2001; Kothari, 2005; Brown and Hanlin, 2013b) and can be used in different ways, for example, i) as a vision of transformation into a more desirable form for the society, ii) as a historical process of social change over time and iii) deliberate efforts (intention) aimed at positive transformation by various agencies, on behalf of others (Thomas, 1996; Hewitt, 2000; Cowen & Shenton, 1996; Brown & Hanlin, 2013a). This thesis is concerned with development as ‘deliberate interventions’ through international volunteering, and uses Thomas’s (1996, pp. 99–100) designation of development management as “The management of the development effort...[aimed to] deliberately influence the course of social change in a positive and sustainable way”. Deliberate development intervention is aligned to the concept of ‘trusteeship’ as “the intent...by one source of agency to develop the capacities of another” (Cowen and Shenton, 1996, p. 25). Linking trusteeship with agency, Thomas and Allen (2000a, p. 189) define agency as “the action of individuals or groups, and their capacity to influence events” and argue that while intentional development necessitates the presence of development agencies to assume the responsibility for trusteeships, it questions authority and motives of the agents to implement development on behalf of others. Thomas (2000, p. 41) observes that “Trusteeship may be taken on by an agency on another’s behalf without ‘the other’ asking to ‘be developed’ or even being aware that the intention to ‘develop’ them is there”.

Contrary to conventional management, which is customarily intent on achieving internal organisational objectives, development management relates to the management of interventions aimed at external social goals (Thomas, 1996; Robinson et al., 2000). This requires negotiating the mobilisation, coordination and access to resources with multiple actors and their diverse interests (Fowler, 1997; Bond, 2002; Lavagnon, 2012). Management of international development takes place at different levels: global and strategic, national project design and implementation, and at the

community level, where complexities arise in relation to the multitude of actors and their different values and aspirations (Robinson et al., 2000). The diversity of actors makes the practice of development management difficult because individuals and organisations may not share the same level of commitment to the goals of development, or may be motivated by different incentives and agendas.

Escobar (1995) suggests that narratives of post-war development influenced the recipients of development interventions to internalise how they perceived themselves in the arena of global power relations. He thus captures the significance of forms of trust (as in trusteeship) and power relations (a potential obstacle to trust) in development management, which are also present in IVS (Pink, 1998; Heron, 2005; Trau, 2014). Unequal power relations can influence the aims and processes of interventions, including those using IVS, diminish trust among the actors and undermine the legitimacy of the agents of development (Thomas, 1996). Since the 1990s, a plethora of donor-driven initiatives has emerged aimed at addressing power inequalities between the global North and South (OECD, 2005, 2008, 2011; The World Bank, 2016; United Nations, 2017), inspired by concepts such as empowerment through participation, partnership, capacity-building and sustainability (Thomas, 1992). Funding for aid, which historically used to flow from Northern governments, or international organisations, to the governments of developing countries, has since become increasingly diverted directly through international and national agencies, including NGOs, INGOs and IVCOs for programme implementation (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Lewis, 2002; Choudry and Kapoor, 2013).

Emphasis on the policies and practices of development management has shifted from top-down approaches often pursued during the period of structural adjustment in the 80s and 90s, to partnerships between donors, states, national and international aid agencies and community representatives and beneficiary groups (Lewis, 1998; Edwards and Fowler, 2002; Rondinelli, 2002; Elbers, 2012). The discourse informing partnerships is that of equality, capacity building and mutual exchange (Lister, 1999; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Pickard, 2007). However, the structural



inequalities between the global North and South, and sustained economic advantages in the North limit the realisation of such goals (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Jentsch and Pilley, 2003; Cornwall and Brock, 2005). This finds congruence in the literature on IVS, where it is shown that the intended aims of IVS are not always realised in equal partnerships. For example, Nelson and Child (2016, p. 543) observe that the outcome of partnerships between IVCOs and local stakeholders in Southern India was contradictory to the intended aims of IVS because they served the interests of the volunteers rather than local needs. Other authors suggest that host country partners have low expectations of positive outcomes from development interventions through working with IVCOs (Appadurai, 1988; Heron, 2011; Lough, 2011; Trau, 2014). The examples from the literature on IVS recognise the presence of unequal power relations in partnerships with power more favourably tilted towards the interests of the volunteers, but they fall short of the analysis of the underlying factors that shape the relationships between the key IVS actors.

Equity in power relations is related to the concepts of trusteeship and agency and implies either the necessity for the presence of trust, or accountability, or both within the relationship between the development agent and the service recipients. Accountability is referred to when suppliers are only rewarded when they provide satisfactory services or products to the intended recipients and can be penalised in cases of failure (Brett, 1993, p. 42). Edwards and Hulme (1996, p. 189) argue that the effectiveness of performance and transparency in reporting are fundamental elements of responsible practice. This has led to donor mandates for 'professionalization' in accounting systems for financial reporting and technical performance monitoring which include greater emphasis on legal frameworks, documentation, strategic planning, and the use of business tools for training, monitoring and evaluation and impact assessments (Hauge, 2002; Rochester et al., 2010; Liao-Troth, 2008; Lindenberg & Dobel, 1999). Donor organisations' calls for professionalization is considered by some authors to be contrary to the rhetoric of participation, ownership and downward accountability, but based on management theories and procedures that help maintain the dominance of Western philosophies and values while creating dependency in developing countries

(Brinkerhoff, 2002; Kapoor, 2002; Alsop, 2004; Mosse, 2005; Avant et al., 2010; Battilana and Casciaro, 2012; Africa, 2013; Gulrajani, 2014).

Engel and Georgeou (2011, p. 298) consider IVS to be a “largely a donor-dominated activity rooted in Western philosophical traditions, history and culture, and it plays a legitimating role in the donor state/NGO international aid system”. Thus, donor imperative for professionalization has increasingly become applied to IVCOs in recent years with the introduction of procedures to measure, quantify and qualify volunteering activities (Lewis, 2001; Merrill and Safrit, 2003; Oppenheimer, 2008). However, not only is this type of intervention hard to get right but it is also very difficult to capture (Bolton, 2007; Ackers and Ackers-Johnson, 2017a, p. 55) as providing evidence requires specific skills and capacities associated with managing and coordinating volunteer programmes (Safrit and Merrill, 2007). Some authors contend that the donor demands for professionalization in IVCOs prioritises measurements that produce expected results rather than accountability in processes or procedures (Engel and Georgeou, 2011).

Some scholars argue that pressure to raise funds steers aid agencies to simplify and overstate the effectiveness of aid (Bolton, 2007; Ackers and Ackers-Johnson, 2017a), while an emerging body of literature points to the challenges of professionalization resulting in tensions at the interface between INGO head offices and their HCOs (Porter, 2003; Elbers, 2012; Walsh, 2014). The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2005) laid out an action-oriented roadmap that included increased ownership of strategic development work by the developing countries and making donors more accountable for the development results, among a number of measures aimed at addressing the imbalances in the aid delivery systems. The combined effect of increased emphasis on aid effectiveness and the economic crisis of the mid-2000s on all global actors of international development has led to changes in donor strategy to fund disbursement, away from unrestricted to restricted funding<sup>8</sup>. Aligned with a neo-liberal approach to economic policy, this has led to

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<sup>8</sup> Also known as ‘undesignated funding’ or ‘core funding’, ‘unrestricted’ is the term commonly applied to funding that is not earmarked for specific projects. The term ‘restricted funding’ applies to funding for specified programmes with

increasing competition among NGOs and INGOs (including IVCOs) as they are required to identify their market niche, demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness, and use performance indicators to attract funding and resources (Robinson et al., 2000; Lewis, 2001; Engel and Georgeou, 2011).

The implications of changes in donor strategies to fund disbursement are particularly significant for IVCOs, as unrestricted funding was historically allocated to many of the IVCOs through strategic alliances or donors in support of IVCO programmes using international volunteers (Engel and Georgeou, 2011; Lough and Allum, 2013), some of which continue to remain so to this day (Allum, 2007; Engel and Georgeou, 2011)<sup>9</sup>. With the exception of UNV which was set up as an agency within the UN, the other four IVCOs studied in this research were set up and operated with unrestricted government funding for several decades (Appendix 1A-E). A good example of the changes in donor strategy on fund disbursement is illustrated by looking at the recent history of VSO (Appendix 1C), which shows how the amount of unrestricted funding to VSO from DFID was reduced from around 90% in the late 1990s to 35% in 2013/14 (OECD 2010, p.151; Ledward and Trivedy, 2010). However, a study of the impact of the challenges of restricted funding on IVCOs is almost non-existent in the literature on IVS, with the exception of research on the subject by Lough and Allum (2013, p. 914) which was acknowledged to be “based largely on the perceptions from IVCO administrators, which may not necessarily reflect reality.”

Despite the changes in the balance of restricted and unrestricted funding support, a significant number of IVCOs continue to receive substantial amounts of their funding from their own or other governments. For example, in 2015/16, 78% of VSO income and 74% of Progressio’s income were from restricted government funding, which raises questions about their independence (Bird, 1998; Graff, 2006; Grubbs, 2009; Rochester et al., 2010). Furthermore, shortfalls in unrestricted-funding

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restrictions placed in order to hold NGOs accountable for delivering pre-defined outcomes in accordance with the principles of aid effectiveness stated in the 2005 Paris Declaration (Nijs and Renard, 2009, p. 10)

<sup>9</sup> A survey commissioned by the Association Learning and Helping Overseas (AKLHUE) showed that: 35% of IVCOs were funded entirely by governments, and national governments provided in excess of 50% of the funding for 75% of all programmes (Euler et al., 2016, p. 32)

are being filled by alternative sources of restricted financing through donor-supported projects and programmes (Liao-Troth, 2008; Rochester et al., 2010; Choudry and Kapoor, 2013). The flow of international aid from donor governments can be direct to IVCOs (in the form of both restricted and unrestricted funding) or to international organisations such as the World Bank, or other INGOs, who then enter into a contractual arrangement with an IVCO to fund a specific project (restricted funding). Increasingly, entire or sections of projects are sub-contracted to consultants and other technical specialist groups or individuals (Edwards and Fowler, 2002), resulting in the fragmentation of the supply chain of IVS service delivery (Wearing, 2016). This adds complexity at the point of project implementation where HCOs work and raises questions with regards to the legitimacy and accountability of the multiple stakeholders.

This section has shown the IVCOs are exposed to external pressures from global trends in the policies and practices of development management that have implications on power relations and bring into question the forms of trust within relationships between stakeholders. Fleuret (1988) suggests that the adoption of a frame of reference for development management should include not only a focus on the final impact of a development activity, but also factors that influence its conception, design, and implementation. The next section looks at the key readings in NGO management literature to examine the extent to which organisational dynamics influence INGOs' day to day operations and their implications for IVCOs and IVS.

## 2.4 NGO management

The literature on NGO management is not concerned with “how to manage an NGO but about how NGOs function and how their effectiveness can be improved” (Fowler, 1997, p. xi). This section contends that there is a gap in the NGO management literature that fails to make the distinction between the role and functions of INGOs' (and IVCOs') central offices and their HCOs. Although the literature on NGO management distinguishes between NGOs, INGOs and even NGDOs<sup>10</sup>, it

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<sup>10</sup> NGDO is the term used by Fowler (1997) and by Edwards and Fowler (2002) to describe non-government development organisation, of which IVCOs are a sub-set.

refers to the latter two when, in fact, it is describing the work of their host country offices in a developing country. This creates the impression of seamless accord between INGO aims, policy and practice - the work of its head office and the HCOs - that may not reflect the realities on the ground. The section looks at the literature on NGO management where IVCOs and their host country offices work. Although IVCOs are a subset of INGOs, their multiple mandates to deliver technical assistance explicitly through IVS, add a distinguishing feature to their organisational characteristics. However, the literature on NGO management does not differentiate IVCOs from INGOs; therefore, the discussion on INGOs in this section also applies to IVCOs, although any significant points of divergence are highlighted where appropriate.

INGOs have to manage an array of complex value-based challenges both within and outside of their organisations, across national and international boundaries, and often in unequal partnerships with donors, governments, communities and individuals (Lewis, 2014). The tasks of managing development projects involve planning, organising, leading, and controlling activities, often in situations of social, political, economic or cultural conflict. Thus INGOs', and NGOs', association with the poor and marginalised may lead to suspicion of their motives and activities by more powerful actors, particularly governments and their agencies (Edwards and Fowler, 2002, p. 4). Although INGOs are largely reliant on the state<sup>11</sup> for funding and support towards goal achievement, they have neither the statutory powers of the state nor the economic influence of the donors (Edwards and Fowler, 2002, pp. 3–4), thus the achievement of both their organisational, and development goals lie beyond the INGOs' span of control. Consequently, INGOs have to rely on negotiating relationships with multiple stakeholders to achieve their goals, which makes the quality of their relationships with their stakeholders crucially important to their organisational effectiveness and survival.

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<sup>11</sup> Although INGOs also receive funding through public donations and philanthropic individuals, they are largely funded by states or donor agencies – see footnote 8

Negotiating relationships involves a variety of unpredictable human behaviours of which trust and power are key influential variables that shape the expectations and behaviours of people and organisations (Nierenberg, 1987; Koeszegi, 2004; Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Olekalns and Smith, 2009; Pettit, 2013). Much is discussed about power relations in the NGO management literature, for example between Northern INGOs and Southern NGOs (Fowler, 1997; Hearn, 2007; Lavagnon, 2012; Choudry and Kapoor, 2013); donors, government agencies and NGOs (Igoe and Kelsall, 2005; Mosse, 2005; Wallace, 2009; Gulrajani, 2014); NGOs and their partner organisations (Penrose, 2000; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Elbers, 2012) and NGOs and their beneficiary groups (Gardner and Lewis, 2000; Lewis, 2002; Rossi, 2006). Choudry and Kapoor (2013, p. 15) observe that “NGOs often create and become enmeshed and invested in maintaining webs of power and bureaucracy, which divert energy and focus away from building oppositional movements for social change”. Some scholars have suggested that NGOs have come too close to being donor-driven (Edwards and Hulme, 1996). This view is widely shared by other authors who argue that there is excessive emphasis within aid agencies on professionalization and in reporting quantifiable data to stakeholders, and not enough on the significance of indirect outcomes and failures within internal management to inform decision-making procedures that could support realistic development goals and positive outcomes (Mawdsley et al., 2005; Choudry and Kapoor, 2013; Gulrajani, 2014).

References to trust and the interplay between different forms of trust and power relations in the negotiation of the relationships between INGOs, NGOs, and their stakeholders are rare and tend to be anecdotal in the NGO management literature (Fowler, 1997; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Lewis, 2014), although it is recognised as a success factor in the management of development projects (Diallo and Thuillier, 2005). Harriss (2003, p. 764) suggests that “the significance of trust is overestimated in some of the literature because many inter-firm relationships involve power as well as, or more than, trust”. In the context of cooperation in inter-organisational relations, Harriss identifies different forms of trust as influential elements because social relationships that create trust lead to increased efficiency in the use of resources (Harriss, 2000, p. 179). Mawdsley et al. (2005) appear to make a similar point viewed from a different perspective, by cautioning against over-reliance on

documentation, targets, and indicators which can undermine trust in personal relationships between donors and INGOs, and their Southern NGO partners.

The way knowledge and information are shared also plays a role in the way relationships are negotiated between actors in NGO management literature and are, therefore, areas for investigation in this research. Nauta (2006, p. 168) observes that NGOs can strategically translate the needs of the different stakeholders in a way that allows NGOs “to control the messages that are relayed from “grassroots” to government and vice versa”. Nauta’s (2006) work not only draws attention to the importance of information exchange between the NGOs and their stakeholders but suggests that far from being relatively powerless or passive participants, NGOs may use knowledge in strategies and behaviours that help them shape their relationships with the other stakeholders. The studies of Ebrahim (2002, 2005) showed how two Indian NGOs were highly selective in sharing information, which they produced not for their own decision-making, but solely to satisfy their donors, in order to safeguard their main activities from interference and lend legitimacy to their activities. The implications are that NGOs can be seen as positioning themselves as the gatekeepers of information between groups of stakeholders (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013, p. 9).

The descriptions of NGOs in developing countries closely resemble the role of the HCOs. HCOs are intermediaries between national stakeholders and the head offices of INGO that are based overseas, with whom they have to negotiate relationships. However, their geographical distance from the central decision-making offices of INGO organisations means that the delivery of INGOs’ intra-organisational priorities may be challenged by the choices that HCOs face in their inter-organisational relationships with the other development actors (Fowler, 1997, p. 52). In his influential work, *Striking a Balance*, Fowler (1997, p. 54) observes that “the responsibility, authority and accountability for negotiation, design quality and subsequent performance [of development processes] belong to those doing the work [and not to the central bodies]”. He argues that what might seem a good idea at the head office of an INGO might appear to be less so, to those parts of the organisation which are working in the field and have to balance their priorities with

those of diverse stakeholders and the donor conditionalities for releasing funds (Fowler, 1997, p. 52). The implications are that rather than being an extension of INGO head office, the function of an HCO is closer to the way local development NGOs<sup>12</sup> in Southern countries are described in the NGO management literature. However, this is not how HCOs are described in IVS literature, for example, Burns et al. (2015, p. 35) note that IVCOs often choose their local partners “Because on paper they had the right infrastructures in place to support the programme objectives of the relevant IVCO or INGO”. Burns et al.’s (2015) description creates the impression that partnership decisions at host country level are made, or are endorsed by, IVCO head office rather than their HCOs.

INGOs are described in the NGO management literature as international development agencies located between donors in one continent, and the stakeholders in another, facilitating the generation and transfer of resources, knowledge, technology, funding and information to the stakeholders (Fowler, 1997, p. 26), and are typically preoccupied with the logistics of delivery systems (Bennett, 2000). INGO aims, and objectives are related to strengthening civil society, supporting local infrastructures that can facilitate sustainable development, empowerment of local organisations and the promotion of cooperative relationships through knowledge sharing (Penrose, 2000, p. 243). On the other hand, INGOs have been criticised for being indifferent to whether local NGOs genuinely represent a grassroots base or “a professional class of NGO representatives with access to international networks” (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013, p. 9).

Local NGOs are recognised through their work in programmes or projects areas that provide basic health & education and poverty reduction activities and are generally considered to be more sensitive to local cultures and traditions (Penrose, 2000; Lewis, 2002). NGOs are drawn into a network of contractual agreements and have multiple accountabilities which have to be negotiated with a large array of heterogeneous individuals and organisations with diverse interests that are involved in the processes of development (Bennett, 2000; Edwards and Fowler, 2002; Choudry and

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<sup>12</sup> Here, distinction is being made between NGOs that are development organisations – work within the framework of international cooperation and work to reduce global poverty and injustice (Fowler, 1997, p. 38)- rather than those working in humanitarian or emergency-relief work.



Kapoor, 2013; Lewis, 2014). Local NGOs have been criticised for competing with statutory services (Hanlon, 1991), or help maintain “the existing power structure intact” (Petrus and Veltmeyer, 2006, p. 20), by employing former civil servants, thus undermining the basis for improved and sustainable social change. Critics also note that NGOs are weak at the contextual analysis of local society; have a poor approach to monitoring and evaluation, and lack key technical skills (Lewis, 2002). Bennett (2000, p. 179) suggests that local NGOs often lack the skills and funding to do their work because they are promoted to provide “extension services for the larger donors and are rarely given money even for administration, let alone capacity building”.

Although the description of HCOs parallels the work of local NGOs, there are dissimilarities because HCOs are also positioned within the internal structure of their foreign parent organisation and mandated by its social and administrative rules and culture. Therefore, examining INGOs as a single operational entity underestimates the divisions of authority, responsibility and accountability, and limits the understanding of the influential factors in the relationships between head office and the HCOs and the decisions that each has to make. While some authors acknowledge the challenges of managing value-based, decentralized organisations (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Fowler, 2000; Lewis, 2014), relatively few scholarly works exist that specifically focus on relationships between HCOs and their parent organisation (Brunt and McCourt, 2012; Elbers, 2012; Walsh, 2014) and they do not include reference to IVCOs. There is, therefore, a gap in the NGO management literature that distinguishes between the roles and functions of INGOs’ central offices their HCOs and analyses the relationships between them. However, parts of the literature on MNCs examine relationships between head offices and subsidiaries of international organisations and can be used to address the gaps in the literature on NGO management.

## **2.5 Parent/subsidiary relationships in multi-national corporations**

This section argues that the relationship between HCOs and IVCO head offices resembles some aspects of the parent/subsidiary relationship in the literature on MNCs. IVCOs rely on HCOs in foreign countries to maintain strong connections to their local communities and to offer insights

into the needs of potential beneficiaries (Nelson and Child, 2016, p. 535). However, the literature on MNCs offers interesting insights particularly on the relationship between how a representative office or subsidiary office works with their central office, which resonates with the decentralised governance, structures and internal procedures of INGOs.

Multinational corporations are defined as “consisting of a group of geographically dispersed and goal-disparate organisations that include its headquarters and the different national subsidiaries” (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1990, p. 603). They function in environmental settings that represent very different economic, social, and cultural milieus and are internally differentiated in complex ways to respond to both environmental and organisational differences (Noharia and Ghoshal, 1994, p. 608). INGOs correspond with the above definition in the sense that their governance structures include a central head office in a developed country and HCOs as operational units - subsidiaries – with varying degrees of legal separation and delegated responsibilities that are based in a number of developing countries (Table 1, p. 14). Subsidiaries have been defined in various ways which include how they are linked to the strategies at the headquarters level; the way an MNC has evolved into an international firm; or the strategies that an MNC uses in the arena of its international market (Enright and Subramanian, 2007, p. 897). In this thesis, the position of IVCO host country offices is considered to correspond with Li’s (2005) description of the subsidiary of an MNC, that is “simultaneously embedded in the [MNC’s] corporate network as well as in its external local market network” (Li, 2005, p. 78).

The MNC literature that scrutinises the relationships between geographically and culturally diverse organisational entities reveals tensions between the parent/subsidiary units that are related to disparity in shared values (Mudambi and Navarra, 2004; Li, 2005), unequal power relations (Reiche, 2007; Huxham and Beech, 2008), and assumptions and expectations based on degrees of trust (Carson et al., 2003; McEvily et al., 2003; Li, 2005). It shows that organisational problems are associated with intra-organisational factors that are influenced by human behaviour, rather than financial or technical orientation. These behavioural factors are symptoms of physical and cultural

distance (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1990; Andersson and Forsgren, 1996), conflicts or misalignment of interest (Noharia and Ghoshal, 1994; Mudambi and Pederson, 2007), and inequalities between foreign and national staff (Caprar, 2011; Harvey et. al, 2011). Andersson and Forsgren (1996, p. 487) draw attention to the difficulties of retaining control in MNCs because rather than being a single entity facing a homogeneous environment, each subunit of the MNC has its own differentiated organisational norms, structures and work practices. These dissimilarities may potentially hinder the integration of head offices and subsidiaries and the processes of knowledge transfer between them (Li, 2005, p. 93).

It is possible to draw parallels between insight from MNC literature to examine the relationship between INGO head offices and their HCOs. There are several ways in which INGOs have attempted to respond to the complexities of multi-national and global management of their organisations while aiming to retain their institutional values through declarations of vision and mission statements and collaborative strategies. Table 1 (Chapter 1, p. 14) illustrates examples of the different types of international organisational arrangements and styles of governance for IVCOs studied in this research. However, although the structures are complex, with varying levels of centralised reporting and administration controls, all these HCOs are directly under the administration of the parent organisation. Thus the challenge for IVCO head offices is to decide on the level of decentralisation, or operational autonomy, allotted to the HCOs. Decentralisation relates to the degree to which power is held centrally and how, and to what level it cascades to the other units within the organisation (Gibbs et al., 2000; Pratt, 2000). Fowler (2000, p. 10) observes that decision-making authority, when placed closer to the point of action, supports more meaningful participation and increases the potential for the empowerment of local actors, local ownership, commitment and sustainability. For INGOs (including IVCOs) the disadvantages of decentralization have been described by Fowler (2000, p. 10) as “erosion of identity, more complex and weaker accountability, empire building, unhealthy dominance or interference of [INGO] field staff due to their proximity, loss of quality control, enhanced potential for fragmentation of effort and conflicting interpretation of policies”.

The challenges faced by INGOs lie in the choice between being responsive to their intended beneficiaries and demands of its donor agency (Johansson et al., 2010, p. 371). Foreman (1999) points out that INGO globalization adds additional costs associated with overheads (governance structures and their maintenance, personnel development, travel, accommodation and facilities), as well as funds needed for soft administrative purposes such as information dissemination and exchange through seminars, reviews, and various meetings and visits necessary for interaction between national member organisations and with the head office. She notes that the costs of overheads and soft administrative purposes can be extremely high and difficult to justify to a donor, thus can constrain an organisation's ability to enact its desired management policies (Foreman, 1999, p. 192). The potential implications are that inter-organisational relationships between INGO and donor agencies affect the intra-organisational relationships between INGO head offices and their HCOs. Conversely, it also reveals that intra-organisational factors, such as the inability to provide the necessary resources for the softer administrative purposes, can have an impact on the HCOs' inter-organisational relationships with the external stakeholders. This is particularly pertinent for HCOs that have to justify the incorporation and contribution of international volunteers in the design and delivery of their development programmes. It draws attention to challenges within the relationship between HCOs and their head offices that may constrain HCOs from the effective delivery of mandates. These challenges are of crucial interest in this research and are explored in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis.

Divergent motivations, cultural diversity and unequal power relations, as well as the multiplicity of stakeholders, add complexity to HCO operations, particularly in relation to the choice of development partners and beneficiaries, as well as programme design. Some authors observe that subsidiary staff are not always representative of the country where they work, from which they may be alienated through association with their foreign-based head offices (Noharia and Ghoshal, 1994; Mudambi and Pederson, 2007). This view is shared by Caprar (2011) who observes that national staff of HCOs do not necessarily represent the culture of the rest of the host country population, but a combination of national culture, and their position within the internal culture of their parent

organisation (Caprar, 2011, p. 608). Cultural differences are not limited to the relationship between HCOs and the foreign-based INGO head offices but also exist within HCOs where national and international employed staff and volunteers work side by side.

Andersson and Forsgren (1996, p. 490) argue that a subsidiary of a multinational corporation is “surrounded by stakeholders who try to shape its behaviour in accordance with their own interests”. This suggests that subsidiaries are not mechanical instruments of head office and often pursue their own interests (Uzzi, 1997). Although the literature on MNCs is helpful in understanding the relationships between the HCOs and their head offices, it is also necessary to gain insight into the way HCOs negotiate relationships with external stakeholders in the host country. The literature on boundary organisations offers an intersection with the literature on MNCs where the relationship between head offices and their subsidiaries represents one of the multiple mandates that HCOs are accountable for, as they straddle different social worlds<sup>13</sup>. The next section turns to examine the applicable parts of the literature on boundary organisations and their relevance to this research.

## **2.6 Boundary organisations: Adding insight to the NGO management literature**

This section argues that HCOs are similar to boundary organisations with multiple mandates and accountabilities in relationships where there is asymmetry of knowledge between actors. HCOs resemble local NGOs because they work within a network of diverse interests and practices where the boundaries between individuals, groups and organisations are never clear, thus there are areas of overlapping uncertainty between different ‘worlds’ that are inclined to function according to different sets of rules (Lewis, 2014, p. 146). The idea of organisations that straddle two or more ‘worlds’ resonates with the concept of boundary organisations: agencies with multiple accountabilities that act as intermediaries between different stakeholders (Guston, 1999; Hanlin et al., 2018). The concept was originally developed to distinguish between the scientific efforts of

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<sup>13</sup> A social world is described as an interactive unit that arises when a number of individuals strive to act in a collective way (Strauss, 1978, 1984). (Also see Chapter 1, footnote 4)

research agencies from non-scientific work (Gieryn, 1983), but has since been used to discuss other forms of interactions between knowledge and action (Molina, 2010; Clark et al., 2016; Sheikh et al., 2016; Hanlin et al., 2018), including in international development studies (Ng'Ang'A, 2012; Velasco, 2013). Although a detailed analysis of boundary organisations is beyond the scope of this research, there are useful cross-cutting elements that can provide relevant insights into factors that affect HCOs' relationships with their stakeholders.

The characteristics of the role and activities of HCOs parallel Guston's (1999, p. 93) definition of boundary organisations for two reasons: a) their function involves participation in multiple relationships where one party has more or less information than another (Hanlin et al., 2018), and b) they exist on the frontier of at least two relatively distinct social worlds (for example, development interventions, volunteering and the host country's institutional context) with lines of responsibility and accountability to each. HCOs are therefore shaped by the demands of the multiple stakeholders which they have to reconcile (Hanlin et al., 2018, pp. 3–4).

The core concept of boundary work is focused on tensions that arise at the interface (boundary) between individuals and organisations that have different perspectives on the type and quality of knowledge that is useful to them (Clark et al., 2016). Boundaries can be solid and prevent meaningful communication, or they can be highly fragmented, allowing infusion of facts with personal views, politics or other social influences that can undermine the value of the knowledge being created or shared (Clark et al., 2016). Boundary work, therefore, refers to the effective management of the interface between the diverse and multiple stakeholders in order to optimise the use of knowledge in the intended activity (Jasanoff, 2004) and involves communicating knowledge, values, and priorities; mediating conflicts and problems; and translating information between actors from different institutional backgrounds (Cash et al., 2003; Kristjanson et al., 2008; McNie et al., 2008; Velasco, 2013). Consequently, more recent discussions on boundary work have focused on the degree to which boundary organisations are 'boundary managers' (Parker and Crona, 2012; Leith et al., 2016; Hanlin et al., 2018).

Guston (1999, p. 105) observes that a multiplicity of mandates weakens the link between the different actors and the boundary organisation. Drawing on the analysis of interactions between scientists (the Agents) and their political sponsors (the Principals), Guston (1999, pp. 92–105) suggests that “the transition from a relationship of trust to one emphasizing accountability, reinforces asymmetry of information between the actors [which may lead to the] consensual production of falsifiable knowledge.” Guston’s point draws attention to the importance of trust and integrity in knowledge sharing for accountability, which is a key element of all development interventions, including those in which IVS is incorporated. Moreover, Sheik et al. (2016) note that the challenges of bridging diverse and multiple boundaries limit the potential for coordination of activities needed to address complex problems in development and constrain goal achievement for target communities. They observe that certain types of boundaries can be embedded in power imbalances by geography or politics and suggest that boundary managers need to consider when to withdraw and allow local actors and institutions to take over (Sheikh et al., 2016, p. 5). This supports the notion that HCOs, like other NGOs, face challenges in managing boundaries because of the difficulties of demonstrating tangible achievements that satisfy the potentially conflicting expectations of key stakeholders. For example, balancing a donor or government’s imperative to support capacity building in the host country by engaging suitably qualified nationals, may clash with IVCO head office’s organisational mandate to promote IVS which involves importing foreign nationals who may obstruct a potential vacancy for a qualified national.

In countries where the tier of educated professionals is still at the level of a minority of ‘urban-based elite’ (Porter, 2003, p. 139), questions arise concerning the factors that influence the relationship between foreign volunteers and professional national staff of HCOs. Furthermore, the status of the volunteers in the host country presents contradictory perspectives. On the one hand, they are perceived as technical experts (Burns et al., 2015), with the power to access resources and networks that are not usually available to the partner organisation and sometimes not even to the staff of the HCO. On the other hand, they are reliant on the HCOs for professional support and personal welfare in alien environments where their familiar terms of reference no longer apply.

Volunteers are, therefore, one of the stakeholders with whom HCOs have to negotiate relationships. The next section explores literature on volunteer management and its contribution to IVS.

## **2.7 HCOs and volunteer management**

Pearce (1993, p. 142) notes that “The tensions that can exist between volunteers and employee co-workers remain one of the unpleasant secrets of non-profit organisations”. Twenty-five years later, Musick and Wilson (2008) observe that a review of the organisational factors affecting volunteers is absent from the literature on volunteer management, which generally focuses on issues that affect volunteer performances. This means that the challenges and conflicts that affect the relationships between HCOs’ staff and the volunteers, and how the outcomes of these relationships impact on their day to day work, remain unexplored.

HCOs are absent in the literature on volunteer management, and the bulk of that literature tends to focus primarily on volunteers working in their own countries (Juknevičius and Savická, 2003; Voicu and Voicu, 2003; Machin and Paine, 2008; Oppenheimer, 2008). While the theoretical basis for applying the insights from domestic to international volunteer management may highlight similarities, empirical study of issues related to managing international volunteers by HCOs has been relatively limited. Such work as exists in an international context has focused on data drawn on the INGO sector where foreign and national employees work alongside each other and with other foreigners such as consultants and general experts (Fowler, 1997; Pink, 1998; Porter, 2003; Crewe and Fernando, 2006) and does not specifically address the management of foreign volunteers. Consequently, there is a gap in the knowledge of the role of HCOs in the management of international volunteers, as well as the challenges that they face in the management of development programmes that use these volunteers.

While there is not a unique universal definition which would cover the complexities of voluntary activities, there is general consensus on some of the attributes of what constitutes volunteering, which include commitment, freewill, non-profit objective, common social interest and belonging to



a group or structure (Beigbeder, 1991, p. 103; Rochester et al., 2010). The literature on volunteering reveals that some of these elements remain contested; for example, some authors contend that there is a small step from reimbursement of expenses to acceptance of payment below the market value, which could be interpreted as work being unpaid, to work being undertaken primarily for financial gain (Pink, 1998; Noxolo, 2011; Trau, 2014).

Discourse on optimising the values and contribution of volunteers and their work has led to a relatively new but expanding strand of literature on volunteer management. Volunteer management is loosely defined in academic literature (Cnaan et al., 1996; Hustinx et al., 2010; Brudney and Meijs, 2014), and is often used interchangeably with the terms volunteer coordination and volunteer administration. Volunteer management is generally associated with “organisational settings [that] support (and restrict) volunteer coordination.... [such as] gaining, orientating, retaining, and organising volunteers in a formal organisation to provide a public good” (Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013, p. 406). However, it is acknowledged that there is no one size fits all solution to the challenges of managing volunteers (Rochester, 1999; Paull, 2000; Machin and Paine, 2008; Meijs and Ten Hoorn, 2008). A growing body of research aims to capture the nuances of managing and coordinating the activities of volunteers based on the motives and dispositions of the volunteers (Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013, pp. 405–6) as well as length and duration of service (Daftary and Moore McBride, 2004; Sherraden et al., 2008), with frequent comparison made to paid staff (Carroll and Harris, 2000; Hager and Brudney, 2004; Liao-Troth, 2008; Machin and Paine, 2008; Rochester et al., 2010; Engel and Georgeou, 2011; Brudney and Meijs, 2014).

The terminology applied to IVS has expanded in the past decades from the original designations of volunteering and its association with selfless goals and non-profit motives of the volunteer, to ones that more closely reflect the changing landscape of development assistance and involvement of volunteers in development. Examples of some of the more recent terms include ‘Development Worker’ (Progressio, 2016), ‘professional volunteer’ (Ackers and Ackers-Johnson, 2017c), Development Advisor (GIZ, 2016a), and International Recruit (Impey and Overton, 2014). The

change of terminology has been accompanied by increased benefit packages allocated to development workers by some IVCOs (Appendix 2) in recognition of the development workers' contribution to programmes, and easing some of the financial and career anxiety felt by the volunteers on return home (Verhoeven, 2002). The shift away from former designations of volunteering to alternative terminology is in acknowledgement of the social and cultural benefits in the types and programmes of volunteering being offered rather than the philanthropic goals of IVS (Engel and Georgeou, 2011).

The range of terminology that is being applied to IVS introduces additional complexity since the terms 'volunteer', and 'development' are both contested (Engel and Georgeou, 2011). Some authors see volunteers as laypersons and helpers (Merrell, 2000), while others consider volunteers as experts (Clotfelter, 1999). Still, others argue that volunteers should be viewed as cooperation partners (Zimmeck, 2001; Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013). The expansion of other forms of international volunteering such as voluntourism, and gap-year volunteering (Simpson, 2004; Jones, 2008; Forsythe, 2011) have added to the confusion among the stakeholders of IVS. Moreover, there has been resistance to the use of the term volunteer in IVS by the increasing number of older, more qualified and experienced volunteers from the global North who are unhappy with the associations of the term volunteer with "unfounded idealism" (Verhoeven, 2002, p. 17), and lack of professionalism and inexperience of youths (Clotfelter, 1999; Dwyer, 2004; Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Aked, 2014).

Diverse characterisations of international volunteering in academic work, as well as in grey literature, illustrate the evolving nature of global trends in international development through IVS, and the increasing ambiguity in the meanings and perceptions of IVS among the stakeholders that differentiate it from home-country volunteering (Sherraden, 2001; Daftary and Moore McBride, 2004; Leigh, 2011; Noxolo, 2011). Ambiguity implies that the bases on which expectations and perceptions of trust and power relations are constructed in the relationships between the HCOs, the volunteers and the other stakeholders are unclear, and therefore more difficult to manage when

compared to local volunteering. This potentially adds to the complexity of the role of HCO as boundary managers and the types of skills and training that they require to deal with the challenges that they face.

Although the role of international volunteers is customarily incorporated within a contractual agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the partner organisation, in practice, the reporting structure is very loosely functional and often unclear on what and to whom is the volunteer accountable (Ackers and Ackers-Johnson, 2017c). The resulting operational challenges for HCOs are evidenced in academic and grey literature spanning several decades that report conflicts between international volunteers and paid staff (Ball et al., 1976; Pearce, 1993; Smith, 1997; Bird, 1998; van Eekelen et al., 2012; Amin, 2014; Burns et al., 2015). For example, Amin (2014) reports persistent problems the international volunteers and the HCOs' staff that include: volunteers arriving "with no clearly defined job, waiting, and no one even expecting them" (Amin, 2014, p. 328); or lack of language skills, which was included in Peace Corps reports in 1960 and again in 2001, 2006, 2008 and 2011 (Amin, 2014, p. 324). Similarly, Bird (1998, p. 170) notes an increase in the number of VSO volunteers who returned home before completing at least eighteen months of their two-year postings from 1% in 1968, to 20% in 1998. In 2012, a consultant's report showed that in one country, the percentage of early returned VSO volunteers was as much as 43% (van Eekelen et al., 2012, p. 22).

Volunteer retention is recognised as a key performance indicator in the volunteer management literature (Safrit and Merrill, 2007; Machin and Paine, 2008; Rochester et al., 2010) and has been associated with the volunteer management capacity in organisations, and the availability of funding to support specific training of paid staff in volunteer management skills (Machin and Paine, 2008). However, there is no indication of research into the underlying issues that affect volunteer retention in IVS, and the figures reported in the above examples remain unchallenged although they are

significantly more than those that exist for home-country volunteering<sup>14</sup>. This implies the persistence of problems in the relationships between the volunteers and the paid staff who are responsible for managing and coordinating their work during their placements in the host countries - the HCO staff. However, despite the expanding literature on international volunteering, none reviews the role of host country offices of IVCOs, which necessitates the management of geographically and culturally diverse volunteers as an organisational goal. The assumptions, beliefs and behaviours of people who act as development agents are central to the work that they carry out. Zimmeck (2001) observes:

*“[Volunteers] work, but they are not employees: they do not have to do what they do; they do it in more episodic, circuitous and idiosyncratic ways; they are not paid<sup>15</sup> for doing it; and, if they do not feel that they are properly involved, supported or cherished, they will walk away”* (Zimmeck, 2001, p. 4).

Diallo and Thuillier (2005) observe that the dynamics of the relationships and interactions between key actors become important success factors in development management, irrespective of the levels of technical knowledge, skills and experiences required. One of the aims of this research is to gain insight on the managing and coordination of volunteers in the process of IVS, by looking at different types of trust and power relations as influential factors in the negotiation of relationships between the HCO staff and the international volunteers.

## 2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the histories of international development and IVS are intertwined and how the evolving perspectives on development have led to opportunities for the expansion of IVS as an instrument of development intervention. However, the terms development and volunteering are both contested and are enmeshed in the discourse of unequal power relations between the global North and South, associated with colonialism and Western economic supremacy. The

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<sup>14</sup> In a national survey of volunteer management capacity in the UK, Machin and Paine (2008, p. 7) report that: “Retention had been less of an issue, with over half (56 per cent) of respondents saying that their organisation did not have any problems with retention. However, it had caused ‘a little’ difficulty for 35 per cent of respondents and ‘a lot’ of difficulties for 9 per cent.”

<sup>15</sup> Volunteers often receive some monetary support so they are not always out of pocket or subsidising themselves

literature shows that unresolved issues have prevailed in the practice of IVS for several decades and reflect the persistence of unequal power relations between the volunteer sending agencies and the volunteer receiving countries, while the literature has focused largely on volunteers. This points to a gap in the organisational elements that contribute to IVS as an instrument of intervention in the management of development interventions.

The literature on development management illustrated the significance of the role of IVCOs in the processes of development management which involve forms of trust (as in trusteeship) and power relations (a potential obstacle to trust) in the inter-organisational relationships between the global North and South. Although the rhetoric of development management promotes partnerships, empowerment and downward accountability, the literature shows that unequal power relations persist in partnerships and the practice of development management through IVS, for example, power can be used in pursuit of the interest of the volunteers or an IVCO's organisational mandate rather than the intended aims for the beneficiaries. While IVCOs can benefit from increased opportunities to access donor funding, they are also under pressure to comply with donor imperatives for professionalization, which are difficult to attribute directly to IVS. Changes in donor strategies to fund disbursement mean that IVCOs work in a more competitive environment where they have to mediate the conflicting mandates between organisational survival and their organisational values. The combination of over-reliance on documentation, targets, and indicators, as well as the competitive environment for access to funds, can undermine trust in the relationships between donors and INGOs, and their Southern NGO partners.

A part of HCOs' work resembles that of a local NGO because HCOs work through partnerships with the 'users' of their services and other national stakeholders with whom they have to negotiate relationships. HCOs are therefore often intertwined in webs of power and bureaucracy and can be criticised for being almost donor-driven. HCOs can act as gatekeepers of knowledge between the stakeholders because their work involves close interactions with the grassroots, and they can exercise flexibility in what and how they communicate information. In contrast, they can be

mistrusted as the instruments of the interests of powerful actors such as donors or foreign governments. Unlike local NGOs, HCOs are also positioned within the internal structure of their foreign parent organisation and mandated by its social and administrative rules and culture. The absence of direct reference to HCOs in NGO management literature makes it difficult to analyse the role that HCOs play in influencing relationships with their stakeholders. Examining INGOs as a single operational entity underestimates the divisions of authority, responsibility and accountability, and limits the understanding of the influential factors in the relationships INGO head office and the HCOs that affect the work of the HCOs and the decisions that they make.

Parts of the literature on MNCs add insight into intra-organisational relationships between IVCO head offices and HCOs. The MNC literature shows that tensions between IVCO head offices and HCOs can be associated with assumptions and expectations based on degrees of trust, conflicts or misalignment of interest, inequalities between foreign and national staff, as well as the physical and cultural distance that constrain the exchange of information between them. The implications are that inter-organisational relationships between the HCO and its stakeholders have an effect on, and are affected by, the intra-organisational relationships between IVCO head office and its HCOs. However, the MNC literature is insufficient in addressing the array of complex value-based challenges that HCOs have to manage, with internal and external stakeholders, and often in unequal partnerships with donors, governments as well as communities and individuals. HCOs are similar to boundary managers with multiple mandates and accountabilities in relationships where there is asymmetry of knowledge between actors. The effective management of the interface involves communicating knowledge, values, and priorities; mediating conflicts and problems; and translating information between actors from different institutional backgrounds. However, increasing demand for accountability, as in donor demands for professionalization, can reinforce asymmetry of information between the actors because of the difficulties in demonstrating tangible achievements that satisfy the expectations of different stakeholders.

Finally, this chapter showed that the proliferation of terminology that is being applied to IVS has introduced ambiguities in the definition of international volunteering. Ambiguity affects power relations and implies that the bases on which expectations and perceptions of trust are constructed are unclear in the relationships between the HCOs, the volunteers and the other IVS stakeholders. This potentially adds to the complexity of the role of HCOs and the types of skills and training that they require to deal with the challenges that they face. Despite a reported history of tensions between HCOs and the volunteers, studies on volunteer management do not include an appraisal of the role of HCOs, which necessitates the management of geographically and culturally diverse volunteers as an organisational goal. There is, therefore, a gap in the literature that addresses the role of HCOs in the management and coordination of international volunteers and has potential implications for IVS, and the management of international volunteers.

This chapter has shown that HCOs are not mechanical extensions of head offices, but straddle multiple 'worlds' where they have different internal and external mandates and accountabilities. Thus the challenges for HCOs are associated with organisational factors that are influenced by human behaviour, rather than financial or technical orientation, and are triggered by the way relationships are negotiated between HCOs and the other IVS actors. While trust is recognised as a success factor in the management of development projects, HCOs often work within networks of power and bureaucracy and can act as gatekeepers of knowledge and information exchange between IVS stakeholders. To better understand how the role of HCOs is perceived and played out in their relationships with the other IVS stakeholders, it is necessary to review the literature on theories of negotiation, power and trust. A critical review of this literature is presented in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

### Negotiation, Trust and Power

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the significance of trust and power relations in situations in which organisations have to negotiate relationships with multiple stakeholders. Edwards and Fowler (2002) observe that the challenge in achieving consistency between policy and practice in development work is that it cannot be accomplished by an individual organisation imposing a strategy because development is only achievable through negotiation and dialogue with external actors. The work of host country offices includes not only to navigate the course of international volunteers' placements, activities and welfare in the host country but to contribute to development activities. HCOs need to negotiate formal and informal relationships<sup>16</sup> with multiple donors, partner organisations, volunteers with diverse interests, as well as their own head offices, across international and cultural boundaries (Grusky, 2000; GIZ, 2016a; Peace Corps, 2016a; UNV, 2016b; VSO International, 2016a). This chapter examines current academic literature on negotiation and recognises the factors that influence the way negotiation of relationships takes place, with a specific focus on knowledge sharing which, as shown in the previous chapter, is of particular interest in this research. It introduces the concepts of trust and power and looks at how they impact on, and are impacted by, the negotiation of relationships between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders.

This chapter argues that the outcomes of the negotiation of relationships in multi-stakeholder situations are influenced by a number of factors of which knowledge sharing is a critical element in shaping, and being shaped by, the interplay between different types of trust and power relations among the actors. The expectations on which trust is based can vary depending on institutional

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<sup>16</sup>To recap: formal relationships are defined through structures, policies and procedures which are legally recognised, deemed valid according to the rules of a system, and are verifiable through documents and primary sources of data (Nierenberg, 1987; Fowler, 1997). Informal relationships are “those that rely on interpersonal networks...which can be familial and customary rather than enshrined in organisational constitutions” (Fowler, 1997, p. 21).



values, characteristics of the actors (for example, age, ethnicity or gender), or the experience of past interactions. The different forms of trust affect, and are affected by, power relations in ways that influence, not only how relationships are negotiated, but the outcomes of those relationships. However, there is a gap in the literature of NGO management in general, and IVS in particular, that analyses the contribution and limitations of the interplay between different types of trust and power relations in the way relationships are negotiated between HCOs and their IVS stakeholders.

**Section 3.2** provides an overview of the literature on negotiation and its relevance in this research. It shows that the current literature on this subject has recognised differences in histories, cultural norms and language as influential elements in negotiation, although it has chiefly focused on the significance of knowledge sharing in the interplay between forms of trust and power relations in negotiating relationships. The section sets out the factors that influence the negotiation of relationships and the importance of knowledge sharing and information exchange, making connections with the literature on trust and power.

**Section 3.3** shows that although different types of trust are recognised in the literature (Blomqvist, 1997; Hardy et al., 1998; Simons, 2002; Harriss, 2003; McEvily et al., 2003), they are largely nuanced adaptations of Zucker's categorization of a) characteristic-based trust (on the social characteristics which are linked to, for example, a person's ethnicity, gender, or family); b) process-based trust (on the expectations based on past experiences, for example, those arising from a history of past interactions); or c) institutional trust (as in formal structures, rules, norms, and conventions that regulate the behaviour of others within society, for example, rules that govern banks, trade and public services). The different types of trust can influence the negotiation of relationships depending on whether trust between the actors is based on positive or negative experiences of past interactions, or on assumptions or characteristics which may or may not be true, and on institutional norms and values which may change over time

**Section 3.4** provides a brief appraisal of the extensive literature on types of power relations, then focuses on how power can influence the negotiation of relationships. It uses Elgström's (1992, pp. 22–24) duo of “essential dimensions of power in negotiating processes” as a guide: the distribution of power over material (for example, funding, transportation and equipment) and non-material resources (for example, knowledge and language), and power to influence the negotiation of relationships between IVS stakeholders, including the HCOs.

**Section 3.5** brings the preceding sections together to present the conceptual framework for the thesis. It illustrates how the analytical framework for the research has been developed to capture the interplay between the different sets of concepts relating to trust and power and their points of convergence in the negotiation of relationships between HCOs and their IVS stakeholders.

**Section 3.6** provides a summary of the literature and the concluding remarks of this chapter.

## **3.2 Negotiation**

How relationships are negotiated between the HCO and the IVS stakeholders shape the justification, design, and terms and conditions of IVS programmes, and characterise the expectations of the diverse actors in relation to their roles within the projects. Negotiation is described as a process involving a chain of activities whereby two or more people gather to address demands and exchange information, with the intent of changing their relationship (Nierenberg, 1987; Giebels et al., 2000; Stark and Flaherty, 2004; Kim et al., 2005; Odell, 2010). Negotiation involves not only sharing knowledge or technical expertise, but also flexibility of approach, honesty and the “ability to listen to ideas that are different to one's own and learn” (Johnson, 2016b), otherwise the potential to develop rapport or build on long term cooperation can be reduced (Kopelman and Olekalns, 1999). Thus negotiation processes are not purely concerned with technical issues, resources or contractual agreements, but are also about human and social interactions that govern relationships, shared values and reciprocity of benefits from agreed objectives (Hewitt and Robinson, 2000). Consequently, as in other forms of social exchange,

negotiation generates risk, ambiguity and the potential for exploitation (Koeszegi, 2004; Olekalns and Smith, 2009).

It is widely acknowledged in the literature that the nature of negotiation implies that the aims, approaches and expectations of one participant may not be the same as another, resulting in a number of different possible outcomes (Kopelman and Olekalns, 1999; Koeszegi, 2004; Stark and Flaherty, 2004; Metcalf et al., 2007; Johansson et al., 2010; Odell, 2010). The simplest forms of outcomes are reproduced below from work by Stark and Flaherty (2004, p. 53) and supplemented by alternative, more descriptive terms in which they are described in the literature:

- **Win-lose or lose-win** (also '*distributive*' (Brett, 2000; Metcalf et al., 2007) and '*interest-based*' (Johnson, 2016c)): one counterpart loses and the other wins
- **Win-win**: (also '*integrative*' (Brett, 2000; Metcalf et al., 2007) and '*value-based*' (Johnson, 2016c)): the needs and goals of both parties are met, so they both walk away with a positive feeling and a willingness to negotiate with each other again
- **Lose-lose**: neither party achieves his or her needs or wants
- **No outcome**: neither party wins or loses, which most likely leaves both parties willing to return to the negotiating table at a later date.

Negotiating relationships can be seen as an attempt to manage interdependence and conflict between parties (Koeszegi, 2004, p. 640), for example, in intra- and inter-organisational relationships where negotiation involves “navigating through a complex process of transactions and rapidly fluctuating interests” (Wu and Laws, 2003). Furthermore, the negotiation of relationships in multinational organisations presents specific challenges for the actors because it involves mitigation of the cultural diversity of staff and partners (Faure, 2002). Faure identifies a number of risks associated with inter-organisational negotiation, including conflict of interest between parties, cultural disparity, damage to reputation, and organisational survival. Koeszegi (2004, pp. 642–3) suggests that while some of these risks can be attributed to human behaviour, others are related to external influences, for example, by competitors, through changes in political or legal systems, or technological changes and innovations.

Negotiation of relationships then, can be seen as an interpersonal and inter-organisational decision-making process aimed at reaching a settlement among interdependent parties with divergent interests, as well as a mechanism to form or redefine the relationship between actors (Giebels et al., 2000; Koeszegi, 2004; Kim et al., 2005). The literature on negotiation shows a number of influential elements in the processes of negotiating relationships of which the most prominent are historical factors (Checkland, 1997; Kopelman and Olekalns, 1999; Fisher et al., 2011); cultural norms (Butler, 1999; Brett, 2000); language (Isaacs, 1993; Cornwall, 2007; Olwig, 2013) and knowledge sharing (Nierenberg, 1987; Butler, 1999; Koeszegi, 2004; Olekalns and Smith, 2009).

### ***3.2.1 Historical factors***

Historical factors refer to past events and experiences that shape the characteristics, values and beliefs of the institutions, organisations and individual actors in IVS. The literature on international volunteering (Chapter 2, section 2.7) reveals that understanding of host country socio-political history has been a significant challenge in IVS from the early days (Ball et al., 1976; Amin, 2014) and remain so to the present. Some academics have argued that donor organisations and INGOs fail to take into account the host country context in terms of its historical background and political, economic, geographic, sociocultural characteristics in the design and implementation of development programmes (Salole, 1991; Lister, 1999; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Shutt, 2006; Pickard, 2007; Gulrajani, 2014). Others argue that despite the rhetoric of North-South partnerships based on ‘equality’, ‘capacity building’, and ‘mutual exchange’, the prevailing structural inequalities founded on historical supremacy of the North over the South and sustained economic advantages in the North limit the realisation of such goals (Brinkerhoff, 2002; Jentsch and Pilley, 2003; Cornwall and Brock, 2005). Noxolo (2011, p. 221) extends this argument to include IVS by stating that in practice, IVS accentuates cultural and economic diversity through the inequality of wealth and opportunity between the international volunteer and his/her counterpart.

The history of institutions and organisations is also pertinent in negotiating relationships and is described as ‘path dependency’ in organisation literature. Path dependency refers to the capacity of

institutions and organisations to change by taking into account their histories, aims and structures and the way these histories continue to influence their decision-making processes in the present (Greener, 2002; Barnes et al., 2004; Peters et al., 2005). Although a detailed discussion of the concept of path-dependency is outside the scope of this thesis, understanding how the histories of organisations shape their standpoint (see footnote 17, section 3.2.4) in negotiating relationships with other IVS stakeholders is helpful in this research.

### ***3.2.2 Cultural norms:***

Culture is widely used in the literature to denote a variety of concepts and meanings. In this thesis, Fowler's (1997, pp. 69–70) definition is used: "Cultural identity is constructed and differentiated by, for example, ethnicity, region, country, language, gender, generation, class, status, occupation, and organisational affiliation....it is a mix of cultural attributes which each individual brings into his or her work setting....". Cultural norms may vary depending on religion, race, gender, and social orders in ways that are not easily discernible by others who are not part of that particular group (Mendonca and Kanungo, 1996; Mosse, 2006; Metcalf et al., 2007). People from different cultural backgrounds utilise different strategies to influence the negotiation processes and outcomes (Cohen, 1997; Brett and Okumura, 1998; Kopelman and Olekalns, 1999).

Cohen (1997) notes that cultural factors can complicate, prolong, and frustrate negotiating relationships because of a fundamental philosophical difference of views about the nature and value of social relationships. The multi-national nature of actors in IVS processes means that inter-cultural factors add to the complexity of the relationships that HCOs have to negotiate. The view is shared by Koeszegi (2004) who observes important differences in the perspectives of stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds that shape the way they perceive and calculate risk in negotiating professional collaborations. Cultural differences related to goals, and attitudes towards power and social relationships, not only vary within geographical areas (Kopelman and Olekalns, 1999) but within and between organisations (Johansson et al., 2010). Thus, cultural differences have an effect on both intra- and inter-organisational relationships between the HCOs, their head

office and their IVS stakeholders. Reiche (2007, p. 528) draws attention to conflicts between local and foreign staff of MNCs that are related to intercultural barriers and suggests that the performance of subsidiaries that are managed by local staff is more positive as a result of “employees feeling respected, recognized, trusted and thus more attached to the local unit”. On the other hand, Caprar (2011) questions whether host country staff who work for sustained periods in a foreign organisation that might be very different from their own culture can be assumed to be culturally representative of the host country population.

### ***3.2.3 Language***

As an essential form of communication, the use of appropriate language allows individuals and organisation involved in negotiating relationships to appreciate views and issues expressed by each participant in understandable ways (Isaacs, 1993). Mutual trust promotes openness in information exchange between actors (Butler, 1999; Koeszegi, 2004; Li, 2005). However, Hardy et al. (1998) argue that the presence of honesty and mutual aims are insufficient for creating trust without actors being able to communicate with each other, for example, through shared language. Language barriers have long been identified as obstacles to productive relationships among IVS actors (Ball et al., 1976; Amin, 2014; Burns et al., 2015). Being multisector and multicultural, the work of HCO and other IVS stakeholders involves being able to “speak the ‘development language’ on one hand, and the ‘peasant language’, on the other and to be an expert in translating from one language to the other” (Bierschenk et al., 2002, p. 431).

Different forms of power have also been perceived through the prevalence of Western practitioners, expats, consultants and volunteers in positions of trust and high rank (Borda-Rodriguez and Johnson, 2013; Trau, 2014) and the use of the ‘language’ and ‘buzzwords’ of development (Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Sørensen, 2008; Olwig, 2013), which are considered by some as examples of efforts to maintain Western supremacy (Simpson, 2004; Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Forsythe, 2011). Others concur that buzzwords in the language of international development appear as a pre-requisite ingredient in funding proposals as well as websites and

promotional material of development organisations and individual practitioners (Leal, 2007; Olwig, 2013). Some authors go even further to suggest that ambiguity in the use of words and phrases can be a deliberate and essential tool used by opportunistic participants who apply their own interpretations to validate the concepts under negotiation (Koeszegi, 2004; Cornwall, 2007).

### ***3.2.4 Knowledge sharing and information exchange***

There are numerous definitions of knowledge and information in the literature. In seeking the most appropriate definitions for this research, the descriptions offered by Meadow et al. (2000) are used to differentiate between information and knowledge. Information involves the use of factual data that “may have no universally accepted meaning but generally carries the connotation of being evaluated, validated or useful data” (Meadow et al., 2000, p. 35). In this research, information would include personal, financial, technical or other specific data included in reports, job descriptions, on websites or other forms of communication. Knowledge is described as “the condition of knowing something gained through experience or apprehending truth... It has a higher degree of certainty or validity than information...and has the characteristic of information shared and agreed upon within a community” (Meadow et al., 2000, p. 38). Knowledge can embody political, social or cultural insight, understanding of the environment or institutions, technical expertise, or specialist skills.

The extent of knowledge sharing and information exchange is a principal element of negotiating relationships (Butler, 1999). Nonetheless, revealing information is risky: open disclosures of aims and intentions may facilitate achievement of desirable outcomes but can also expose an actor to opportunistic behaviour by the other actors (Brett, 2000; Koeszegi, 2004; Olekalns and Smith, 2009). Two types of information are particularly pertinent: information about parties’ power (such as power over economic or physical resources, power to influence), and information about parties’ interests (for example, values and motivations) that shape their particular standpoints<sup>17</sup> (Brett,

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<sup>17</sup> Standpoint’ in negotiations is defined by Johnson (2016a, p. 13) as “Attitudes or outlooks arising from one’s circumstances or beliefs, or how we see the world. Standpoint... will be affected by our own histories (personal and professional) and the social context in which we have lived them.”

2000; Fisher et al., 2011). However, acquiring such information and deciding on the degree of the disclosure can be challenging. In the absence of necessary information about the other party, actors are unable to find opportunities for compromise, hence may be tempted to suppress or misrepresent information as a way of strengthening their standpoint and influencing more favourable outcomes which, in turn, increases the potential for exploitation of the other party (Olekalns and Smith, 2009).

Differences in culture also affect information sharing, both in the way information is regarded as important in negotiation and the style that information relevant to negotiation is shared (Brett and Okumura, 1998). Brett and Okumura observe that the information is shared in different social groups reflects cultural values that shape choices and primacy for some goals rather than others; the subtleties of within-culture expressions of communications, or whether social status implies social power and knowledge of status dictates how people will interact...where social inferiors are obligated to defer to social superiors and comply with their requests” (Brett and Okumura, 1998, pp. 99–101).

Koeszegi (2004, p. 643) argues that often actors “are confronted with asymmetrical information and knowledge about the negotiated issue, i.e. one party has considerably more information than the other.” An asymmetric level of knowledge and information among actors is likely to disadvantage members of the less powerful groups who are more likely to need to collect information about the dominant group prior to the processes of negotiating relationships. On the other hand, reliance of the dominant group on stereotypical assumptions, may block their understanding of the other parties and reinforce existing power structures (Kopelman and Olekalns, 1999). Individuals who are viewed as low in competence can raise uncertainties about their ability to accurately use information and make positive contributions to the negotiation, while individuals of low perceived integrity raise questions with regards to the veracity of their intentions (Olekalns and Smith, 2009).



Symmetry in knowledge sharing resonates with the literature on boundary organisations (Chapter 2, section 2.6). Clark et al. (2016, p. 1) identify three key factors that contribute to effective boundary work: i) participatory and meaningful knowledge creation by stakeholders across the various boundaries (ii) organisational structures and processes that deliver accountability to appropriate stakeholders; and (iii) the production of “boundary objects” defined as “collaborative outputs such as reports, models, maps, or standards that reflect the views of actors on different sides of the boundaries”. However, Cash et al. (2003, p. 8808) suggest that effectiveness of boundary management reduces when information exchange is one-way, irregular, or when stakeholders from either side of the boundaries feel left out of the communication processes for knowledge sharing or make assumptions.

From a different perspective, in examining the relationship between principals (non-scientist policy-makers) and agents (scientists) in boundary organisations, Guston (1999, p. 93) observes that the transition from a relationship of trust to one emphasizing accountability presents a ‘moral hazard’ to the policy-makers who may be disadvantaged by inequality of information. He argues that the integrity of the work of the agents - how they conduct their work and report their findings honestly, and the productivity of the work- whether or not the work actually contributes to the intended goal, both can lead to a moral hazard. “After the principal selects agents, the latter have relatively wide latitude in the performance of [their work], even to the point of dishonesty or unproductive dabbling” (Guston, 1999, p. 93). The principal/agent relationship described by Guston is similar to the interdependent relationship between HCOs and their more powerful stakeholders such as donors, governments or IVCO head office to whom HCOs are accountable for different mandates. Guston’s (1999) proposition parallels Nierenberg’s (1987, pp. 81–83) description of a “calculated risk”. Nierenberg observes that although assumptions are an essential part of negotiation, actors take a calculated risk when they behave as though an assumption is a certainty. Guston’s moral hazard and Nierenberg’s calculated risk have implications for IVS because they raise questions not only regarding the integrity of information exchange between HCOs and the key stakeholders but how the information is analysed and turned into action.

Symmetry in knowledge sharing and information exchange is therefore recognised as the cornerstone of effective negotiation (Nierenberg, 1987; Butler, 1999; Cornwall, 2002; Koeszegi, 2004; Stark and Flaherty, 2004; Olwig, 2013). Negotiation requires participants to have access to knowledge and information (Koeszegi, 2004), and a common language that facilitates mutual understanding (Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Olwig, 2013). Consequently, symmetry in knowledge sharing is an important influential element in the negotiation of relationships.

The discussion above shows that negotiation of relationships involves navigating through a complex process and interests. Since it is not always possible to fully determine the objectives and motivations of the other participants, negotiating relationships can be viewed as heavily reliant on the human behaviours of which trust and power are salient dimensions. Trust and power relations shape the expectations and behaviours of people and organisations that are IVS stakeholders and influence what and how they share knowledge and information. It is, therefore, necessary to understand how the negotiation of relationships between HCOs and their IVS stakeholders has an impact on, or is impacted by, forms of trust and power. The next section examines the conceptualisation of trust.

### **3.3 Trust**

Trust stems from positive beliefs about another person's motives and intentions and can be defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another" (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). A slightly different perspective is offered by Woolthuis et al., (2005, p. 816) who, rather than considering trust based on something that the other party might do, reflects on what the partner might not do: "[trust is] the expectation that a partner will not engage in opportunistic behaviour, even in the face of opportunities and incentives for opportunism, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that party." Others consider that trust improves the efficacy of decision-making processes by simplifying the assimilation and analysis of information (McEvily et al., 2003, p. 93). Trust is viewed as a form of a gamble taken on the behaviour of another, with the expectation of reduced

levels of the cost, or damaging effects of the risk (Luhmann, 1979; Diallo and Thuillier, 2005; Li, 2005). Blomqvist (1997, p. 279) suggests that uncertainty, vulnerability and the potential for avoiding risk, and information about the other party or situation, are seen as necessary conditions for the existence of trust, which he then relates to concepts such as loyalty, confidence, competence, credibility, and faith.

Common definitions of trust describe two distinctive bases for trust: as ‘predictability’, defined as the probability with which an actor assesses that another actor will act in a certain way (Luhmann, 1979; Zucker, 1986) and the role of ‘goodwill’ defined as mutual expectations of reciprocity between partners (Ring and Van De Ven, 1992). Trust means that it is not necessary to gain the full range of information in order to formulate rational decisions; it involves constructing expectations through the use of information that is available, and the necessity to “fill the gaps in information and uncertainties [by making] ‘judgement calls’ and ‘leaps of faith’ based on social knowledge” (McEvily et al., 2003, p. 99). Some consider that trust promotes more effective inter-organisational relations by restricting opportunistic behaviours, reducing complexity, and by stimulating coordination and cooperation in ways that are not possible through contractual agreements alone (Hardy et al., 1998, p. 1). However, Harriss (2003, p. 758) argues that the complexity of globalisation creates challenges for the construction of trust among the actors because of the growing levels of risk in present-day social interactions.

Li (2005, p. 81) suggests that trust can play a key role in tempering the potentials for opportunistic behaviours in inter-organisational relationships where formal control mechanisms are difficult to and costly to institute. However, Li contends that in intra-organisational relationships, trust may be less important because the risks associated with possible undesirable behaviours or practices can be reduced through a combination of authority (management structures, policies and procedures) and organisational culture (Li, 2005, p. 81). On the other hand, Andersson and Forsgren (1996, p. 489) note that although subsidiary behaviour is influenced by strategies policies, and procedures used by head office to control and assimilate their subsidiaries within the wider organisation, “subsidiaries

are also embedded in networks that include other actors inside and outside the MNC.” They argue that a subsidiary's role in networks “is shaped and developed in interaction with these actors rather than through any specific decision by headquarters....and is based on relationships developed over a long time” (Andersson and Forsgren, 1996, p. 489).

The presence of trust in social interactions plays a central role in intra-organisational relationships in ways that extend beyond the controls that are formally enacted through organisational principles and management procedures (Hardy et al., 1998; McEvily et al., 2003; Diallo and Thuillier, 2005; Li, 2005). For example, according to Simons (2002, p. 18), the perception of whether a manager's words tend to align with his or her deeds is critically important for the development of trust in employees and can noticeably influence the manager's credibility. In particular, Simons (2002, pp. 28–9) observes that in organisations where there is a great need to manage the perceptions of diverse stakeholders, the demands of certain managerial tasks encourage managers to represent themselves differently to different parties which, when noticed by employees, may affect their levels of trust in the behavioural integrity of the more senior staff.

The level of trust in relationships is subject to fluctuations as organisations evolve and alter, and people's behaviours and attitudes may also change in response to different experiences or a miscalculation of the other party's trustworthiness (Blomqvist, 1997). As conditions change, maintaining commitments and promises may become impractical for individuals and organisations at some point. In such situations, it becomes necessary to rebuild trust, in addition to creating and maintaining it (McEvily et al., 2003, p. 100). Trust can be built by creating conditions that promote the generation of trust (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Zucker, 1986; Harriss, 2000). During the processes of negotiating relationships, there are instances when the ability to trust increases or lessens; is created or lost; trust is, therefore, dynamic rather than static in quality (Wu and Laws, 2003). Trust may be damaged by competition, the fear that shared information may be misused in some way (Li, 2005), or through interactions that underpin the maintenance of asymmetrical power relations. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish between trustworthy partners and others who

assert trustworthiness while manipulating others through opportunistic behaviours (Hardy et al., 1998). Trust can be undermined in a number of ways: it may be damaged when the negotiation that is experienced is different from the negotiation that was expected (Kopelman and Olekalns, 1999), or it may gradually erode after recurrent episodes of perceived distrust (Fox, 1975; Zucker, 1986; Blomqvist, 1997). Competition can also undermine trust in collaborations, by creating suspicions that shared information may be misused by self-interested actors to increase their power to influence within relationships (Li, 2005).

Zucker (1986) asserts that trust may be based (a) on the social characteristics which are linked to, for example, a person's ethnicity, gender, or family; or (b) on process (expectations based on past experiences, for example, those arising from a history of past interactions); or (c) on institutions (as in formal structures, rules, norms, and conventions that regulate the behaviour of others within society, for example rules that govern banks, trade and public services). Zucker's argument has been particularly influential in the literature (Blomqvist, 1997; Hardy et al., 1998; Simons, 2002; Harriss, 2003; McEvily et al., 2003) and informs organisation literature among other scholarly work (Li, 2005; Lumineau and Schilke, 2018). However, the terminology used to describe different types of trust in the literature is inconsistent and demonstrates considerable overlaps. Hardy et al. (1998) distinguish between two forms of trust: spontaneous trust and generated trust. Spontaneous trust refers to when shared meaning permits trust to occur between parties who may not know each other, although they may be able to make judgements and communicate with each other based on the recognition of long-standing symbols such as an organisation's reputation or history of service (Hardy et al., 1998, pp. 21–22). Hardy et al.'s description of spontaneous trust corresponds with Zucker's typology of characteristic-based and institutional trust because neither is reliant on past experience (process-based trust). Generated trust refers to when a trusting relationship develops by using verbal and non-verbal communication symbols to create shared meanings where none existed before (Hardy et al., 1998, p. 23). This description implies a time-reliant process (process-based) by means of which trust can be generated or increased between parties as a result of the continued realisation of expectations and positive outcomes of interactions.

Schilke et al. (2016) distinguish between affect-based trust “considered as being similar to ‘trust at first sight’” (corresponds with spontaneous, characteristic-based and institutional trust) or knowledge-based trust which is “built steadily on ongoing relations between the parties over time” and grows, in particular, through professional communication (corresponding with process-based trust). Harriss’s (2003, p. 761) use of the term ‘personal trust’ is less explicit since it is based on ethnic or social connections (characteristic-based), or an organisation’s reputation (institutional), or on past experience of collaboration (process-based trust). Table 2 summarises the key elements in this discussion.

Characteristics of trust	Contribution to negotiation	Challenges
<b>Predictability:</b> Assumptions made by a person on the likelihood of another to act in a certain way (Hardy et al., 1998)  <b>Goodwill:</b> Mutual expectations of reciprocity between partners (Hardy et al., 1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricts opportunistic behaviour</li> <li>• Promotes cooperative attitudes</li> <li>• Simplifies communications</li> <li>• Facilitates knowledge sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is difficult to maintain, especially when multiple stakeholders are involved</li> <li>• It is dynamic, can erode or be lost</li> <li>• Over-reliance can block new relationships</li> <li>• Over-reliance can lead to vulnerability</li> </ul>
Types of trust	Definition and interconnections	
<b>Characteristic-based/ personal trust</b>	Trust is tied to a person /ethnicity/gender/family or other social order. (Zucker, 1986). Corresponds with spontaneous trust (Hardy et al., 1998), personal trust (Harriss, 2003), and affect-based trust (Schilke et al., 2016)	
<b>Process-based trust</b>	Trusting expectations are based on past experiences (Zucker, 1986). Corresponds with generated trust (Hardy et al., 1998), personal trust (Harriss, 2003) and knowledge-based trust (Schilke et al., 2016)	
<b>Institutional trust</b>	When trust is based on formal structures, rules, norms, and conventions that regulate the behaviour of others within society. (Zucker, 1986). Corresponds with spontaneous trust (Hardy et al., 1998), personal trust (Harriss, 2003), and affect-based trust (Schilke et al., 2016)	

**Table 2:** Summary of the key elements of trust in negotiation (Source: author)

Uzzi’s (1997) description of embeddedness (Chapter 2, section 2.5) suggests that the degree to which someone is known to an individual will determine the level of trust that permits that individual to enter into contractual or network situation with them. Furthermore, Li (2005, p. 93) observes that the effects of trust between individuals from different national or corporate cultural backgrounds, may be different from intra- and inter-organisational trust. The implications are that different types of trust are likely to exist between the HCOs and head offices compared to the HCO and its local network of actors or the HCO and the volunteers. This is particularly relevant in intra-

organisational relations both within and between the different operational units of IVCOs, including HCOs and head offices, where staff from diverse backgrounds interact with each other at different levels of the organisation on a frequent or regular basis.

In this research, the typology of trust as set out by Zucker (1986) is used in the analysis of data as it most closely reflects the diversity of the IVS actors and situations where relationships between the HCOs and the IVS stakeholders are negotiated. Zucker's (1986, pp. 60–64) categorisation of trust provides a connection between trust and knowledge sharing in negotiating relationships by showing how the construction of each type of trust relies on the accuracy of information exchange between the parties:

- In process-based trust, the production of trust is reliant on a history of prior information exchange, or association of positive outcomes to previous exchanges. This, points to the necessity for an iterative process over a long period.
- Characteristic-based trust requires only information regarding 'social similarity'. It depends on characteristics such as affiliation with a specific cultural system or shared background expectations, on the basis of which, social judgements can be made legitimately.
- In institutional trust, the exchange takes place across group boundaries and uses formal structures, norms and rules to produce trust. Institutional trust "is a commodity that can be manufactured by individuals or firms ....and can be 'signalled' by association, for example, memberships of a group of organisations of a particular type, or and adopting organisational forms, regardless of its effects on firm's performance." Furthermore, institutional trust relies on "the legitimate concerns that the transaction may not be completed or may fail to produce the expected outcome through no fault of either party involved in the exchange." (Zucker, 1986, p. 64).

The discussion in this section illustrates the positive and negative contributions of trust to the processes of negotiating relationships. However, Harriss (2003, p. 746) contends that the significance of trust is overestimated in some of the literature because many relationships involve power as well as, or more than, trust, thus implying some parties' preference for dominance in negotiating relationships rather than partnership or collaboration. On the other hand, Bachman

(1998, p. 313) notes that: “Power in the form of hierarchy and structural domination can enable social actors to trust each other at the impersonal level”. These accounts suggest that varying forms of power can shape, and be shaped by, different types of trust in negotiating relationships. The centrality of trust and power in the negotiation of relationships has been expressed in different ways by different scholars. Hardy et al. (1998) note the importance of taking power into account when defining trust, as relationships that give the impression of trust may sometimes conceal efforts to reinforce asymmetrical power relations. Brinkerhoff (2002) suggests that an actor’s approach to negotiating relationships is driven by his or her willingness to share power. Koeszegi (2004, p. 641) observes that in negotiation “trust creates dependency and dependency is associated with power”, while Olekalns and Smith (2009, p. 358) consider that characteristics of the settings in negotiation are related to power distribution while the characteristics of actors reflect trustworthiness. The next sub-section examines the conceptualisation of power.

### **3.4 Power**

Constructions of power are numerous, varied in forms and can be described in many different ways. Power is seen as “part of the fabric of our social structures and norms and as operating in ways that are neither obvious to us, nor very easy to see” (Pettit, 2013, p. 31). In its simplest form, an early definition was offered by Dahl (1957, pp. 202–3) as “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do”. Interpreted in this way, power can appear as a negative or even a threatening force, but it can also be exercised in positive ways, for example, to promote social change in favour of the poor or justice for the disadvantaged (Eyben et al., 2006). Consequently, the diverse conceptualisations of power in academic work reflect the multiple dimensions of expressions, forms, extent, and sources of power (Lukes, 1974; VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002; Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Huxham and Beech, 2008) as well as levels and spaces where power is exercised (Gaventa, 2005; Allen, 2015).

Power can be present in both formal and informal forms. Formal power can be viewed as “the visible, recognised structures of power that are part of the way in which institutions mediate the



relationship between those with legitimate authority and those who are subject to that authority, the laws and rules that define what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, and how those who break laws and flout norms are treated” (Pettit, 2013, p. 39). Informal power considers human behaviour and social interactions as both enabling and constraining actors’ capacity to act (Lawrence, 2008, p. 174). Pettit describes informal power as a form of ‘invisible power’ (Gaventa, 2006) that can be viewed “as the socialised norms, discourses and cultural practices that are part of our everyday lives. Informal power relations are internalised through socialisation from a young age, starting with acceptance of inequality in roles” (Pettit, 2013, p. 39).

Power can also be expressed in different ways. ‘Power over’ relates to the control of the relationship, and the ability of the dominant actor to influence the activities and beliefs of the weak (Huxham and Beech, 2008). ‘Power to’ is concerned with the capacity to exert power, rather than the relationship itself (Lukes, 1974; VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002). ‘Power with’ refers to the building of consensus among actors with diverse interests, and developing of collaborative strategies that strengthen the organisation as a collective (Rowlands, 1997; VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002); and ‘power within’ has to do with a person’s sense of the sense of confidence, dignity and self-awareness that pre-empt an individual or a group’s actions (Chambers, 1994; Pettit, 2013). Power is also relational, meaning that people can occupy more than one position of power depending on the context: they can be dominant in one situation and subordinate in another (Chambers, 1997; Gaventa, 2005; Pantazidou, 2012). This relational portrayal of power mirrors Foucault’s (1982) view of power as residing not in individuals, but in the positions that they occupy.

Hardy et al. (1998) note that power can create the illusion of trust through manipulation or consent, which they define as:

- **“Manipulation** [is when] power is used to manage meaning and to bring about cooperation. However, these actions are part of a strategy to increase power: as one party accumulates it, the other loses it.

- **Consenting to power:** [is a] situation in which cooperation between parties with vastly differing power reserves create a façade of trust....[hence] cooperation is not achieved through trust but, rather, through dependency where conditioning and power combine, to produce acceptance and submission” (Hardy et al., 1998, p. 24).

Manipulation can look like trust (Hardy et al., 1998, p. 26) and act through strategies that maintain or reinforce inequalities or feelings of powerlessness (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Chambers, 2006; Lawrence, 2008). For example, when one actor is dependent on another for a critical resource, they can use their control over critical resources as a tactical manoeuvre to place the dependent organisation at a power disadvantage and effect a change of behaviour in others (Elbers, 2012). This finds congruence in MNC literature (Chapter 2, section 2.5) where Andersson and Forsgren (1996) note that the control of critical resources is an important basis of power in intra-organisational relations. They argue that “power based on the control of critical resources is multidirectional and can flow upwards, downwards or horizontally, i.e. from subsidiaries to head offices as well as the other way” (Andersson and Forsgren, 1996, p. 490). Crucially, they extend the argument by suggesting that “relationships with the actors that surround the subsidiary are sources of power that affect the subsidiary and can be used by it to exert influence on other actors” (Andersson and Forsgren, 1996, p. 490).

In her research of victims of class and racial discrimination in Haitian society, Moncrieffe (2006) questions whether people consent to power through lack of alternative options or due to social norms that prevent them from challenging power. She reflects that consenting to power may imply adapting while continuing to have the ability to resist and even dominate some situations (Moncrieffe, 2006), which parallels Scott’s (1985) description of resistance as a weapon used by the weak over the strong. This suggests that different actors can have the power to influence the negotiation of relationships depending on the level of the power they have over resources. Power over a critical resource may relate to tangible matters such as funding, access to equipment or services, or intangible elements such as knowledge, cultural insight or language (Shutt, 2006). Pettit (2013, p. 41) suggests a number of different sources of power that include perceived moral

authority, and physical attributes (such as age, health, skill, or charisma) or social identity (gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation). Thus, as some authors observe, power can also exist among the ‘powerless’ as power rooted in scarce resources is essentially the power of sanctions; it relies on the possibility that the threat of pulling out of the relationship may be real (Huxham and Beech, 2008, p. 566). In most cases subordinates defer to superiors on the assumptions of the latter’s right to exercise power by virtue of their position, thus imparting legitimacy to the authority.

The multiple constructions of power are inter-connected, infiltrate all aspects of human relationships, institutions and systems of knowledge, and are part of the way societies and cultures work (Pettit, 2013, p. 39). For example, in the context of development, ‘power with’ could apply to a collaborative approach to programme identification, design and implementation among the stakeholders among actors, and ‘power within’ might describe a charismatic community leader or a volunteer whose maturity, experience or cultural sensitivity helps drive the projects towards their intended goals. Power can exist at the different levels within a given development programme, for example, in the HCO’s relationship with multi-and bilateral donors, governments and international aid agencies; or with their head office or partner organisations in the host country, and between the HCO and volunteers. Formal power can be exercised through national government and international development policies, as well as inter- and intra-organisational rules, structures and procedures that govern the interactions between HCOs, their partner organisations and their head office. Informal power can relate to social and cultural interactions between individuals and organisations that reflect the way that they relate to each other (Huxham and Beech, 2008).

Negotiating relationships is a form of social exchange (Olekalns and Smith, 2009, p. 347) between actors who want something; otherwise, there would be nothing to negotiate (Nierenberg, 1987). This means that negotiation is about compromise, based on the belief of each actor that the other has power over a valued - tangible or intangible - resource that they are willing to share. The extent of sharing depends on each actor’s ability to persuade – the power to influence – the other to

wholly or partially release the desired resource. Thomas (2000) observes that while resources are directed to goal achievement in conventional management, development management involves the use of resources to influence social processes. Moreover, Fisher (1983, p. 150) argues that “the ‘real negotiating power’ is the ability to influence the decisions of others”. This makes understanding the distribution of power over tangible (for example, funding, transportation and equipment) and intangible resources (for example knowledge and language), and power to influence in negotiating relationships critical to this research. This approach also concurs with Elgström’s (1992, pp. 22–24) suggestion that the distribution of power over resources and influential norms are “essential dimensions of power in negotiating processes”. Consequently, ‘power over resources’ - both tangible and intangible (Pettit, 2013) - and ‘power to influence’ are used in the analysis of data as they most closely reflect those power relations between the HCO and the IVS stakeholders that are the focus of this study.

This section has laid out how power relations shape the contexts, the structures and the behaviours of actors, and influence the standpoint (section 3.2) that they adopt in the negotiating relationships. Negotiation can be seen as an attempt to manage interdependence and as a process to establish, define, or redefine the relationship (Koeszegi, 2004, p. 640), but is dependent on actors’ willingness to share power as a way of building relationships rather than relying on the mechanics of contracts and procedures (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Access to and control over certain resources is necessary for achieving organisational goals, hence the exercise of power in negotiating relationships inevitably generates resistance, compliance and strategic consent (Long, 2001, p. 71). Power can also influence the negotiation of relationships between key stakeholders of development interventions, including IVS, by shaping the language of policies and processes that help secure funding and support (Cornwall, 2007, p. 474). Thus understanding power in negotiating relationships is useful in understanding its connection to the literature on trust and their relevance to IVS. Table 3 summarises the key elements of literature on power and their interpretations.

Categorisations of power	Definitions
Positive power	A force for social good (Pettit, 2013, p. 39)
Negative power	Something held or exercised by one person or group to control or dominate others (Pettit, 2013, p. 39)
Formal	Power dynamics that underpin laws, rules, organisational structures, policies and procedure that contribute to negotiating relationships - (Pettit, 2013, p. 39)
Informal	The socialised norms, discourses and cultural practices that are part of our everyday lives (Pettit, 2013, p. 39)
Manipulation	When power is used to manage and to bring about cooperation as part of a strategy to increase power (Hardy et al., 1998)
Consenting	When cooperation is achieved through dependency where conditioning and power combine, to produce acceptance and submission (Hardy et al., 1998)
Expressions of Power	<p><b>Power over</b> - the control of the relationship, and the ability of the dominant actor to influence the activities and beliefs of the weak (Gaventa, 2006)</p> <p><b>Power to:</b> the capacity to exert power (Gaventa, 2006)</p> <p><b>Power with:</b> The building of consensus among actors with diverse interests, and developing collaborative strategies that strengthen the groups as a collective (Gaventa, 2006)</p> <p><b>Power within:</b> a person's sense of the sense of confidence, dignity, and self-awareness (Gaventa, 2006)</p>
Sources of power	Access to resources, means; culture, language, social networks, location; access to information, knowledge and technology; perceived 'moral authority'; physical attributes or social identity (Pettit, 2013, p. 39)
Weapons of the weak	Consenting to the power adapting while exercising capacity to resist and even dominate (Scott, 1985)

**Table 3:** Summary of the key elements of literature on power and their interpretations in this thesis (Source: author)

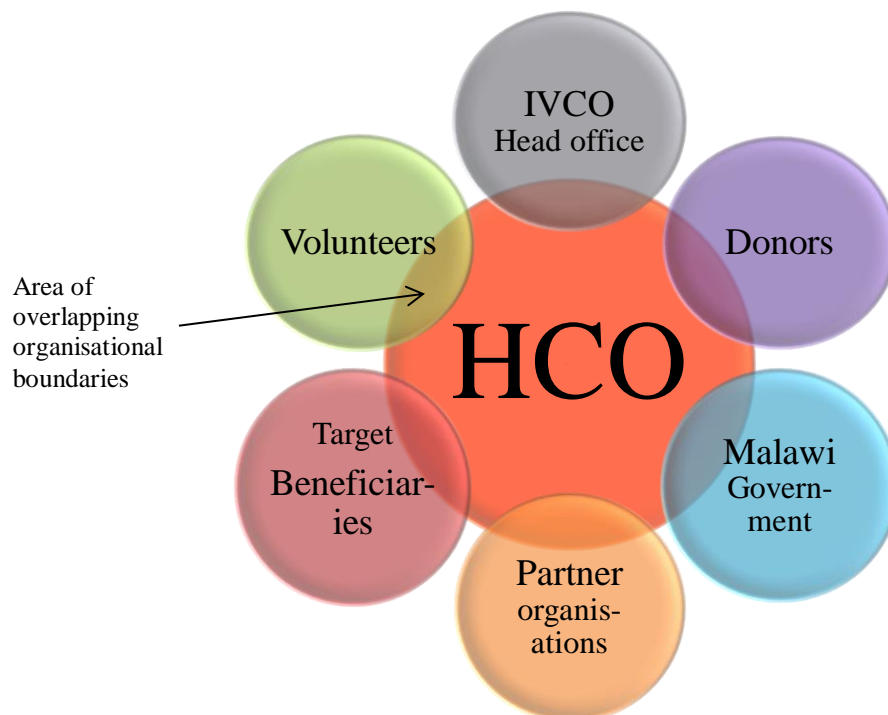
The discussion so far in this chapter concurs with Olekalns and Smith's (2009, p. 358) suggestion that the combination of power relations and trust is important in influencing how relationships are negotiated. The next section turns to explain the overarching conceptual framework for this thesis.

### 3.5 Conceptual framework

This research aims to explain the contradictions in the nature and processes of development interventions through IVS, by analysing how relationships are negotiated between IVCO host country offices and the stakeholders in IVS programmes. In doing so, it analyses how relationships are negotiated between IVCO host country offices and the multiple and diverse IVS stakeholders (Chapter 2). The stakeholders include international donor agencies, the government, public and private sector institutions in the host country, international and national partner organisations,

consultants, contractors and representatives of beneficiary groups, as well as their own IVCO head office and the volunteers.

The literature on boundary organisations (Chapter 2, section 2.6) suggests that HCOs straddle different ‘social worlds’ that are inclined to function according to different sets of rules, but where boundaries are never clear. At the same time, the literature on MNCs indicated that the behaviours and decision-making processes of subsidiaries of multinational corporations may not always be aligned to the parent organisations’ values and policies since they can be influenced by ‘embedded’ social attachments (Chapter 2, section 2.5) or by stakeholders who try to shape its behaviour according to their own interests. This implies that inter-organisational relationships affect the intra-organisational relationships between IVCO head offices and their HCOs. Extracting information from Figure 3, I was able to develop Figure 4 to show HCOs as boundary managers, and the overlapping organisational boundaries that HCOs have to bridge in their day to day work with their diverse stakeholders.



**Figure 4:** Showing HCOs as boundary managers and their different IVS stakeholders (Source: author)

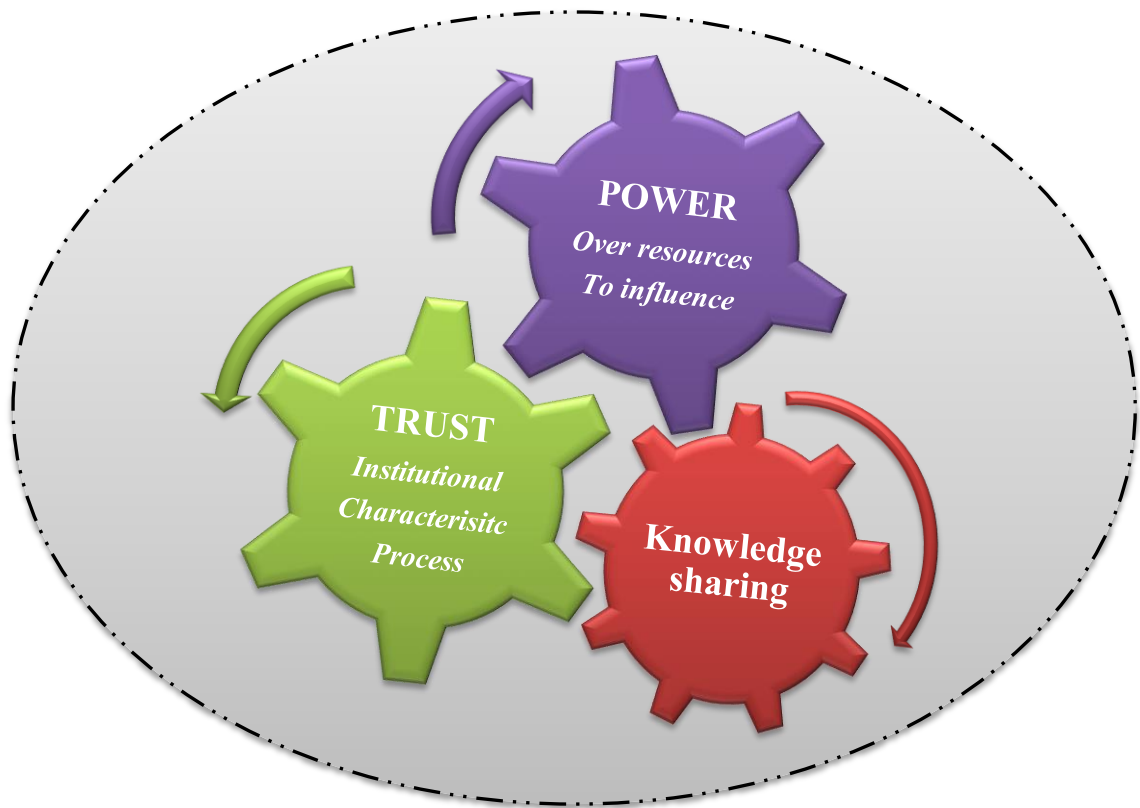
The diagram is developed simply to represent the diversity of key stakeholders but does not attach relative importance or organisational priority to any particular relationship. Furthermore,

relationships that may exist between the different stakeholders are not shown, in order to maintain the focus of the research on HCOs. As outlined in Chapter 1, three categories of key stakeholders were identified during the fieldwork and provide the main focus of the data analysis, based on the patterns of interaction, and the level at which these relationships are negotiated:

- i) The international volunteers,
- ii) Their IVCO head offices, and
- iii) The other stakeholders such as partner organisations, government and international funding agencies.

HCOs negotiate relationships with stakeholders in different contextual settings, and across different boundaries, where there is an asymmetry of knowledge between individuals and organisations and diverse perspectives on the type and quality of knowledge that is useful to them. In addition, the inter-relationship between forms of trust and power relations presents a number of potential solutions to negotiated relationships, each of which may emerge in real life situations. The analytical framework for this research has, therefore, been further developed to capture the interplay between the different sets of concepts relating to trust and power as key influential elements that constrain or support the flow of knowledge, and hence, shape the behaviours of people and organisations in the negotiation of relationships.

The complexity of the inter-relationships between HCOs and their IVS stakeholders (shown as areas of overlapping organisational boundaries in Figure 4 above) is magnified in Figure 5 below to illustrate how the negotiation of relationships relies on different types of trust and power relations when knowledge sharing is also a crucially influential element.



**Figure 5:** Represents a magnification of the HCO/stakeholder boundary overlap (from Figure 4) and the factors that influence negotiation of relationships (Source: author)

Figure 5 shows the importance and interdependence of trust and power relations and the way they impact, and are impacted by knowledge sharing in the relationship between HCOs and their IVS stakeholders. The organisational boundary is shown as permeable, rather than solid, to denote flexibility within the relationship. The diagram is intended to show the dynamic nature of relationships with the mechanisms (influential elements) that influence the way these relationships are negotiated and its potential to move in favour or against the HCO or the other stakeholders. The direction of the movements is only used as a figurative way of showing that the interplay between these elements is dynamic, rather than static. No significance is implied in the colour or size of the influential elements, although trust can be created or eroded and the distribution of power can change, thus any change in trust and power can affect the nature of the relationship and hence, how it is negotiated.



### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the importance of trust and power relations in situations in which organisations have to negotiate relationships with multiple stakeholders. It has demonstrated that achieving consistency between policy and practice in development work is a complex task and requires negotiating relationships with multiple, intra- and inter-organisational actors.

HCOs negotiate relationships at multiple levels, and with multiple partners of diverse national and international backgrounds. How relationships are negotiated between the HCO and the diverse IVS stakeholders shape the justification, design, and terms and conditions of IVS programmes, and characterise the expectations of the actors about their roles within projects. Negotiating relationships can help build on long term cooperation, but they also generate risk, ambiguity and the potential for one actor to exploit the other for personal gain (Olekalns and Smith, 2009, p. 347). The literature on negotiation shows that although historical factors, cultural norms, and language are influential factors in negotiating relationships, reciprocity in knowledge sharing and information exchange is considered key in negotiating relationships. However, revealing information is risky because although it may facilitate goal achievement, it can also expose an actor to opportunistic behaviour by the other actors. This chapter has also shown how trust and power relations shape the expectations and behaviours of people and organisations. Zucker's categorisation of institutional, characteristic-based and process-based trust is used in this thesis to examine trust among the diverse actors and situations where relationships between the HCOs and the IVS stakeholders are negotiated.

Finally, this chapter has shown that power is a feature of interdependence in negotiating relationships. Dependency creates spaces for the exercise of power in both positive and negative ways. Power can be attributed to a particular or highly desired resource which could be tangible, such as funding, number of employees, or equipment, or intangible such as knowledge. Power over desired resources can facilitate power to influence within relationships in different ways; for example, donors' power over funding allows them the freedom to influence the choice of

development projects and partners; on the other hand, local knowledge can give apparently weaker partners the power to influence their position within a relationship by withholding necessary information. In the context of development, donor countries are criticised for the imposition of rigid structures that are based on Western assumptions and serve to maintain the supremacy of the philosophies and values of the countries of the global North, while creating dependency in the countries of the global South. This view is reflected in the literature that sees donor organisations and practices exercising power through tangible and intangible forms of interaction that undermine the established traditional and informal processes in poor countries. The relational characteristic of power (section 3.4) suggests that an individual or group in an organisation may be dominant in their local setting but marginalised in a national context or the parent organisation's hierarchy. While working as an IVCO subsidiary, HCOs also have to manage power relations within their own organisations and other stakeholders.

The combination of embeddedness in the local environment and exposure to a foreign organisational culture implies potential conflicts between HCOs, their head offices, and other IVS actors which can impact on levels of knowledge sharing, and subsequently the types of trust and power relations. This view concurs with Fowler's (2000) observation that tensions and challenges in INGOs organisations are more pronounced in the outer boundaries of the organisation where direct interactions take place, rather than at its central head office (Fowler, 2000, p. 52). Based on the findings and discussions in this chapter, the analytical framework was developed to address the research question in this thesis. The next chapter sets out the methodology behind the research, how fieldwork was undertaken, and how data was collected to answer the research question. It illustrates precisely which relations are explored, between the HCOs and i) The international volunteers ii) Their IVCO head office, and iii) The other stakeholders such as partner organisations, government and international funding agencies.

## Chapter 4

### Research Methodology

#### 4.1 Introduction

The theoretical basis and the conceptual framework for this study that was presented in previous chapters supported the methodological design of this research. **Section 4.2** sets out the justification for the choice of the research strategy and methods to answer them. **Section 4.3** presents the inductive/abductive logic (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Schwandt, 1997; Ritchie et al., 2003; Potter, 2013) and social constructivist nature (Laws et al., 2003; Bryman, 2004; Jupp, 2006) of the methodology from a theoretical perspective. **Section 4.4** describes the scope of the study and the processes leading to the choice of Malawi as the field of study and the five IVCOs as cases of focus in this research. **Section 4.5** presents a brief description of the country context in Malawi. **Section 4.6** sets out how the approach from section 4.3 was put into practice and describes the process of data collection. **Section 4.7** explains how the analysis of data from the research proceeded as a progressive process of knowledge construction. **Section 4.8** describes the challenges, dilemmas and ethical considerations during data collection. It also provides details of how concerns with regards to validity and reliability were addressed in conducting the field research, with particular emphasis on issues related to my personal position as IVS researcher and PhD student. **Section 4.9** concludes by reflecting on the main elements of the methodological design of this research and summarises the common concerns and criticisms about the rigour of qualitative research.

#### 4.2 Background and justification

An important consideration in developing the research methodology was to focus on a specific setting where Northern IVCOs operate and where their HCOs interact with the beneficiary groups, partner organisations, and international volunteers, as well as their parent organisation. My research was not concerned with numeric analysis but with meanings and interpretations of social phenomena and the context in which they occur (Schwandt, 1997; Laws et al., 2003; Jupp, 2006). A qualitative approach seeks to understand the world through interaction, empathy and

interpretation of the social world by learning about the social and physical spaces where the participants are located: their accounts of their past and present knowledge, experiences, and perspectives (Ritchie et al., 2003; Jupp, 2006). Therefore, a qualitative methodology was the most appropriate way for me to examine how relationships between the HCOs and their stakeholders are negotiated. Underpinning my research strategy and choice of methods were a social constructivist ontology, and an epistemology based on participation, to further facilitate the exploration of how the relationships between the HCOs and their stakeholders relate to the aims and processes of development interventions through IVS. Achieving the objectives of my research necessitated that I develop an understanding of social issues in their real-life context, thus a case study research (Keddie, 2006; Schwandt, 1997; Yin, 2003) was the most suitable approach to use. This approach was further refined to encompass a multiple-case study research method (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles et al., 2014). The theoretical basis informing the choice of a multiple-case study approach is discussed in-depth in sub-sections 4.3.1.

### **4.3 Research approach**

This research is about the complexities of interactions between multiple stakeholders, in a specific context, that engage the services of international volunteers to achieve developmental goals. Consequently, the methodological approach was chosen in such a way as to allow as impartial as possible and in-depth interrogation of data from diverse sources.

Having recognised qualitative research as the overall approach for data collection, my choice of methods was subject to addressing the ontological and epistemological concerns related to the overarching research question that my study was aiming to answer. Ontological concerns query the “nature of the world”, its components and the way they interact with and relate to each other (Potter, 2013, p. 79). A positivist ontology regards the world as objectively ‘out there’, observable, and completely independent from the role of human interpretation (Laws et al., 2003; Potter, 2013). However, a social constructivist ontology posits that “social reality is not a fixed phenomenon” (Jupp, 2006, pp. 202–203); and that social ‘realities’ emerge through social interactions where

environmental dynamics always present opportunities for the construction of new and different ways of perceiving and interpreting the social world (Laws et al., 2003; Bryman, 2004). Thus, the social constructivist ontology most closely reflects the multiplicity of perspectives that this research aims to explore, potentially allowing a better understanding of the different ways through which reality can be experienced by the participants.

The concept of epistemology is concerned with the “nature of knowledge” (Potter, 2013, p. 79) and “what is or should be regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline” (Jupp, 2006, pp. 202–203). Building on the social constructivist ontology, it followed that a constructivist epistemology rather than positivist would better serve the aims of this research. A social constructivist epistemology relates to how ‘knowledge is constructed’ through how people associate meanings to issues rather than a ‘true’ knowledge to be discovered (Potter, 2013, pp. 79–80). It implies that knowledge is not a single entity but can exist in various forms, depending on the perspective of the participant who constructed the knowledge.

Drawing conclusions from a particular data set can be inductive, deductive or abductive (Schwandt, 1997; Potter, 2013). The distinction is related to whether the intended aim of the research is to derive theory from the data collection and analysis (inductive), to test a pre-existing theory (deductive) or to deliberately look for and puzzle out reasons for anomalies, inconsistencies, and incongruities in what has been examined (abductive) (Ritchie et al., 2003; Potter 2013; Miles & Huberman 1994). My research aimed to question the interactions between HCOs and their IVS stakeholders, as well as to challenge any assumptions that I may have had before engaging in the fieldwork. In this sense, my analysis of data followed a combined inductive/abductive reasoning by “looking for patterns and association derived from observations” (Ritchie et al. 2003, p.14) within the case study.

Finally, I had to reflect on my own role and points of view and how they may have influenced the collection and analysis of data. Reflexivity involves the recognition of the partiality of the

researcher in the research process and that “a focus on how does who I am, who I have been, who I think I am, and how I feel affect data collection and analysis” (Pillow, 2003, p. 176). Some authors suggest that listening and writing with reflexivity help position the researcher and facilitate awareness of how one’s personal history can influence the research process and hence result in more “accurate,” or more “valid” research (Ball, 1990; Altheide and Johnson, 1998). Other scholars argue that while reflexivity is essential in the endeavour to attain objectivity and neutrality, such aspirations are never fully achievable (Snape and Spencer, 2003, p. 20). Velasco (2013, p. 75) suggests that assuming a position of full neutrality by both the researcher and the informant “could limit the degree of understanding that could be achieved by reducing the richness of information that can arise from multiple perspectives and from the interaction between the investigator and people involved in the phenomena”. Sub-section 4.7.1 of this chapter presents a more in-depth discussion on the ways in which reflexivity, and my position as the researcher, were addressed in this study.

#### ***4.3.1 Case study research***

Case study research is a strategy for undertaking social inquiry (Schwandt, 1997, p. 13) with its ‘defining feature’ being the “multiplicity of perspectives which are rooted in a specific context” (Lewis, 2003, p. 52). Yin (2003, p. 1) argues that a case study approach in academic research is more suited to ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions. Stake (1995) asserts that the primary concern of case study research is to generate knowledge of a specific phenomenon, and its strength lies in allowing the researcher the flexibility to use a variety of data collection methods and “to compare within cases and across cases for research validity” (Dooley, 2002, p. 338). Different types of qualitative methods can be used to collect both naturally occurring and generated data. Ritchie (2003, p. 34) suggests that naturally occurring data illuminate “behaviours and interactions (whether acted, spoken, or written) [that] need to be understood in the real world” while generated data “involves reconstruction, and require re-processing and re-telling of attitudes, beliefs, behaviour or other phenomena” (Ritchie, 2003, p. 36).

Yin (2003, p. 13) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident”. I chose Yin’s definition of a case study for this research because generating knowledge through social inquiry by asking ‘how’ questions from multiple participants in a specific context are what this study aims to achieve. Thus, I considered a case study approach as the most suitable way to optimise, capture and generate knowledge, and to ask: “What is happening here?” My objective in this research was to study human relationships, and the factors that influence those relationships, between the HCOs and their diverse and multiple stakeholders, in different levels and contexts. However, a case study approach that involved in-depth investigation of a single unit of analysis (an HCO) would limit the likelihood of developing a generalizable theory in this research (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles et al., 2014). Miles et al. (2014, p. 67) note that generalizability of data from multiple cases is possible, providing data is “from several settings studied together, systematically contrasted yet contextually grounded.” They argue that a multiple-case study adds confidence to findings because looking at processes and outcomes across similar and dissimilar cases, helps develop understating of how, where and why things happen or continue to happen, to what extent they are influenced by local conditions, and hence lead to more robust explanations (Miles et al., 2014).

A multiple-case study approach closely matched the aim of my research which was to use HCOs of a number of different IVCOs as the units of analysis, and examine their relationships with their stakeholders at the same time, using a single country as the contextual background. Furthermore, a cross-case approach compels researchers to look deeper into issues using multiple perspectives, thus increases accuracy and reliability of the data as well as the probability of capturing unexpected findings (Eisenhardt, 1989, pp. 17–20). Section 4.7 of this chapter describes how cross-case approach was used to analyse the data accumulated for this research, and to determine underlying factors that influence the way relationships are negotiated between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders.

Despite its strengths as a qualitative research method, the case study approach is also open to criticism due to the subjective nature of the relationship between the researcher and the informants. Consequently, case study research is also concerned with methodological rigour and quality of the research, defined by demonstrations of the inter-related concepts of validity and reliability in the generated data (Thomas, 1998; Dooley, 2002; Yin, 2003; Jupp, 2006; Tsang, 2014). Validity often refers to bias introduced by the researcher as well as the research informants, and is used to criticise case study research by raising questions with regards to the objectivity of the inquirer (Schwandt, 1997; Ritchie, et al., 2003; Yin, 2003; Mac Lean, 2013; Silverman, 2013). Schwandt (1997, p. 9) identifies three types of biases that can emerge in qualitative research: i) through choice or overreliance on key informants, events or statements; ii) the presence of the researcher and iii) the effects of the site on the respondent and the researcher. In this research, I addressed the requirements for validity and neutrality by minimising the three types of bias by i) choice of a wide range of informants that could add different perspectives, ii) choice of country and organisations of which I had little or no previous experience<sup>18</sup> and iii) choice of locations where the participants felt comfortable and free to express themselves.

Yin (2003, pp. 34–37) defines reliability as “Demonstrating that the operations of a study - such as the data collection procedures - can be repeated and with the same results.... by ensuring that if a later investigator followed the same procedures and using the *same* (author’s italics) case study, would arrive at the same findings and conclusions”. Since evidence in a case study may be derived from multiple sources, mechanisms for ensuring reliability involve procedures for database management and record-keeping in ways that ensure the presence of clear linkages between the research questions, the collected data and the conclusions (Schwandt, 1997; Dooley, 2002; Yin, 2003; Silverman, 2013). To address any concerns of reliability, I produced a case-study protocol (see section 4.4 of this chapter) and developed questions for each category of participants (see section 4.6.2). Interviews were recorded and later transcribed with details of the time, date and

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<sup>18</sup> Although I had previous experience of working with VSO, I had no experience of working with VSO in Malawi.



location of the interview and the name and title of the participants. An electronic version of the database was created to complement the hard copies of the data.

Another way of establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research is through triangulation. Jupp (2006, p. 99) offers a simple explanation of triangulation as “The observation of the research issue from (at least) two different points...because the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon”. Thomas (1998, pp. 330–1) views triangulation as the complementarity of two approaches: “different methods of investigation: (analysing archive records, grey literature, media, as well as published literature & interviews) *and*<sup>19</sup> getting evidence from several sources (interviewing individuals, checking reports from several agencies)”. My approach to triangulation was guided by Thomas’s description: the assimilation of data from different sources (literature, websites, media, IVS actors and stakeholders), and using different methods (document review, interviews and non-participatory observations) to compare data and validate findings from the case studies. Further details on the methods for data collection and analysis are provided in sections 4.6 and 4.7.

#### **4.4 Scope of the study**

The scope of this research was driven by the centrality of its focus of the on the HCOs and their relationships with their key stakeholders. Consequently, in determining the type and specifications criteria for sample selection, it was important that I disassociate background factors in IVS that centred on volunteers, but were neither relevant to, nor associated with, the role of HCOs. This was in line with Miles and Huberman’s (1989) caveat for maintaining the integrity of cross-case study in a contextually grounded manner to strengthen the generalizability of findings. Having decided to use a single country as the contextual background, my approach to arriving at a sampling strategy was to ensure that the relationships between the HCOs and their stakeholders should be similarly characterised. This involved defining specific criteria for a) the type of IVS placement and b) the type of IVCO organisation that I wanted to study.

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<sup>19</sup> Author’s italics

Given the diversity of the definitions and interpretations of international volunteering (Chapter 2, section 2.7), I looked at types of IVS where the duration of placement allowed for meaningful relationships to develop between the HCOs, the volunteers, and the stakeholders in the host country. I also ensured that the IVCOs descriptions of the administrative and support processes for the volunteers before and during their stay in the host country were not only development related, but were similar. For example, I rejected those where volunteers had to pay for their own flights or other elements of their placement. The list below shows the criteria used for the type of IVS service examined this research:

- Placements of one to two years, with the possibility to extend
- Aiming to provide skills and experience not available locally to the partner organisations
- Recruitment and placing of qualified and committed professionals, who also possess intercultural skills, mobility and flexibility
- Recruitment to specific placements by working alongside a counterpart or a team of people within a partner organisation
- Integration into local structures, involving living and working alongside partners and colleagues in comparable conditions
- Receiving a monthly living allowance (plus other benefits), which is in line with that of local professionals working in the development/charity sector of the country in which they are placed.

Once the scope of IVS criteria was determined, it helped narrow down the choice of organisations that use international volunteers. I then constructed the sampling criteria for IVCO organisations based on the ‘most-similar’ units (Gerring, 2007, pp. 131–134) in which the context (the country) is the same (Miles et al., 2014). Thus, I eliminated volunteer sending organisation whose aims, and strategies might have added extra variables to the relationships between the HCOs, the volunteers or other IVS stakeholders, for example, those involved in faith-based or humanitarian work. Thus organisations providing the following types of volunteering were excluded:

- Short term placement (less than six months)
- Faith-based volunteering
- Gap year and adventure volunteering
- Organisations that require advance payment to send volunteers abroad
- Humanitarian and emergency relief (such as the Red Cross, World Vision)

- Organisations that only provide specialist technical expertise (such as engineers and medical professionals) rather than generalised and flexible proficiency
- INGOs that do not work through international volunteers (such as Oxfam and BRAC but may, nevertheless, engage volunteers in capacities other than those outlined above)
- Organisations with less than 20 years' history of operation, which operate in less than three countries

Having determined that a case study approach was the most suitable method of inquiry, it was necessary to define “What is this a case *of*? (authors’ italics)” (Ragin and Becker, 1992). My early model for the research was constructed on the bases of choosing one IVCO as the case study and exploring the research question in two different countries, in different continents, where the IVCO had active operations. The geographical choice for the case study and its components were designed to permit interrogation of two HCOs from the same organisation, but different contextual settings, thus protecting the research from unknown variables or sudden shifts in the nature of the organisational context (Yin, 2003, p. 45).

However, this model attracted challenges through its focus on a single organisation and whether the data collection and analysis could be generalizable to other IVCOs, or that this research may have been viewed more as a critical evaluation of one particular part of an organisation rather than the sector. I subsequently revised the research design to look at five IVCOs in a single country context using a cross-case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles et al., 2014). The decision behind the choice of cross-case study approach was based on a variety of reasons. Firstly the diversity of organisational forms showed that no two IVCOs were identical and therefore, it would not have been possible to collect all the required data from a single IVCO to support this thesis. Secondly, more cases are needed when the external conditions are more complex, and a greater degree of certainty is required (Yin, 2003, pp. 49–51). This applies to IVCO host country offices, based on discussions presented in Chapters 2 and 3.

Table 4 below shows the country profiles that assisted the selection process by revealing characteristics of interest in the research. Eliminating Upper and Lower Middle Income (LMI)

countries narrowed the focus on the Low Income (LI) countries that are considered more urgently in need of developmental aid.

Country	WB* category	Poverty headcount ratio % of population @	CPIA #	Dev. Assistance as % GNI
Cambodia	LI	17.7 (12)	3.4	5.6
Ethiopia	LI	84 (06)	3.7	8.1
Malawi	LI	50.7 (10)	3.5	31.5
Mozambique	LI	54.7 (08)	3.4	14.9
Nepal	LI	25.2 (10)	3.	4.5
Rwanda	LI	44.9 (10)	4.2	14.6
Sierra Leone	LI	52.9 (11)	3.3	9.8
South Sudan	LI	50.6 (09)	2.1	13.4
Tanzania	LI	28.2 (11)	3.8	7.9
Uganda	LI	19.5 (12)	3.7	7.0
Zimbabwe	LI	72.3 (11)	3.1	6.5

**Table 4:** Country profile data<sup>20</sup> showing Low-Income countries in need of development aid (Source: author)

\* LI = Low-Income country

@ The figures in brackets indicate the year the data was obtained

# Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (1=Low to 6=High): Rating of countries against a set of 16 criteria grouped in four clusters: economic management, structural policies, policies for social inclusion and equity, and public sector management and institutions.

The next step was to identify countries in which at least three IVCOs were operating following Yin's (2003, p. 26) assertion that "each case study and unit of analysis either should be similar to those previously studied by others or should innovate in clear, operationally defined ways". I was then able to identify those countries that fitted both of the criteria of being LI-rated according to the World Bank Indicator system (World Bank, 2016), as well as having at least three IVCOs operating in the country. Table 5 shows the final choice of countries that met the double criteria:

Country	Challenges Worldwide	AVID	GIZ	Progressio	Peace Corps	Goal	UNV	CUSO	Total
Cambodia	√	√	√		√		√		5
Ethiopia	√		√			√		√	4
Malawi	√		√	√	√	√	√		6
Nepal	√	√	√			√			5
Rwanda	√		√		√		√		3
Sierra Leone	√		√			√		√	4
Tanzania	√	√	√		√		√	√	7
Uganda	√		√		√	√	√		5

**Table 5:** Country profile of IVCO s operating in the shortlisted countries<sup>21</sup> (Source: author)

<sup>20</sup> Data from the World Bank on (World Bank, 2016) and UNDP from (UNDP, 2016)

<sup>21</sup> Information obtained from the websites of the organisations on 28/01/2016

In addition to theoretical considerations, the choice of the case study was underpinned by pragmatic decision-making based on the presence of personal and professional contacts able to assist with the logistics of in-country fieldwork in the time available. I chose Malawi because of the availability of personal contacts that could facilitate introductions to the various HCOs and partner organisations. Furthermore, there were no other considerations such as language barriers (other than at the community level), the possibility of violent conflict or natural disasters. The choice of organisations within a specific geographical space cannot be considered independently of the context in which they are situated. In Malawi, heavy reliance on international aid reflected low levels of economic development, poor infrastructure and undependable public sector institutions<sup>22</sup>. Consequently, relationships between the HCOs and IVS stakeholders were likely to be restricted to a relatively small network of actors at the national level, and the opportunities for choice of programmes tended to be limited to a narrow band located just above that of emergency relief.

A multitude of IVCOs work in Malawi, each of which might have conformed to the criteria stated above, for example, the Japanese Development Agency, and others from in and Sweden. The IVCOs shown in Table 4 were identified through a web-based survey of IVCOs working in Malawi that matched the criteria established in the scope of the research and illustrated the diversity of IVCOs' organisational forms. However, Challenges Worldwide and GOAL declined to participate in this research. Consequently, my final choice of IVCOs as focus cases in this study was narrowed down to the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Voluntary Services Overseas International (VSO), The Peace Corps, and Progressio (Appendix 1 A-E).

## **4.5 Malawi: The country context**

Malawi, is a landlocked country in South Central Africa, over 118,000 km<sup>2</sup> with an estimated population of about 18 million (The World Bank, 2018), with Lilongwe as its capital. Formerly known as Nyasaland, it was renamed Malawi on gaining independence from British rule in 1964.

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<sup>22</sup> As shown in the previous sub-section

Under a new constitution, Malawi became a republic and, since a referendum in 1993, it has been a multi-party democracy (Ross, 2013; UNDP in Malawi, 2015; The World Bank, 2017).

However, in reality, the political leaders in Malawi are seen to govern in a style that reproduces “colonial forms of authority” where political expression is mediated by powerful patrons through whom the people can access the means and resources for daily survival (Gaynor, 2010, p. 805).

Since independence in 1964, Malawi has increasingly become a donor-dependent country and supported by foreign aid which is largely channelled outside of the government system and through INGOs (Adhikari, 2016a; Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). Over 80 per cent of Malawians live in rural areas (Government of Malawi, 2017, p. xviii) and 71 per cent live on less than \$1.9USD a day (UNCTAD, 2017, p. 3). The Malawi government has difficulties in balancing its efforts to restore fiscal discipline with its aims to effectively respond to Malawi’s food security needs, in addition to building and expanding the economy, improving education, health care, environmental protection, and becoming financially independent. The country still faces a number of challenges including: insufficient energy generation and supply; high transportation costs; inadequate skilled human resource; inadequate financial resources; narrow export base; inadequate diversification; high illiteracy levels; high population growth; overdependence on rain-fed agriculture and HIV and AIDS pandemic (UNDP in Malawi, 2015; The World Bank, 2017).

Malawi is heavily reliant on foreign aid and receives more aid per capita than other low-income countries, including those in sub-Saharan Africa (Gabay, 2011; Dionne et al., 2013; Adhikari, 2016a; Khomba and Trew, 2017). Dionne et al. (2013, p. 13) report that all of Malawi’s 28 districts are engaged in projects supported by international aid received from 31 different donors, and largely focused on health, education, economic management, infrastructure and services, water and sanitation, and agriculture. The main bilateral donors to Malawi include the US, UK, Germany, and Norway and, more recently, China and India. The primary multilateral donors to Malawi are the European Union, the Global Fund, the African Development Bank, and World Bank (Dionne et al., 2013, p. 15). Although volunteering through faith-based organisations continues to remain active in

Malawi, the number of large and small secular international volunteer sending organisations has also proliferated in Malawi in line with the expansion of INGOs' activity in the country. Data before and during preparation for this research showed that the range of volunteer sending agencies in Malawi varies from large IVCOs from Europe, the United States, Asia and Australia, to small independent charities being operated by individuals or small groups from different parts of the world.

The relationship between the Malawi government and the international donor community has been a turbulent one (Dionne et al., 2013; Baker Tilly, 2014; Gabay, 2014). Some authors observe that the emphasis placed by donors on participation of the poor in policy formulation processes and demand for accountability from the government, has promoted the growth of a significant number of civil society organisations that have subsequently “made a significant contribution to representing the voice of the poor in policy decisions” (James and Malunga, 2006, p. iii). On the other hand, Gabay (2014, p. 384) observes that despite the government of Malawi's use of the state's influence to undermine the interests of its opposition, Malawian leaders receive positive public perception by the international community, and are noted more for making policy statements (Gabay, 2014).

In December 2000, the IMF stopped aid disbursements to Malawi due to corruption concerns, and many individual donors followed suit, resulting in an almost 80% drop in Malawi's development budget (Dionne et al., 2013; Baker Tilly, 2014). Following the reinstatement of funding to the Government in 2005, and an impressive period of economic growth until 2009, the donors, yet again, froze aid to the country in response to financial mismanagement by the Mutharika administration (Baker Tilly, 2014). Subsequent to a period of relative economic stability, a report commissioned by DFID in 2013, exposed an incident that came to be known as the "Cashgate", a financial scandal involving looting, theft and corruption that happened at the seat of Government of Malawi (Baker Tilly, 2014; Kondowe et al., 2014; Anders, 2015; Patel et al., 2015). In October 2013, the African Development Bank, the IMF, several European countries, and the US indefinitely

froze \$150 million in direct budgetary support in response to “Cashgate,” citing a lack of trust in the government’s financial management system and civil service. Most of the frozen donor funds - which accounted for 40% of the budget - have since been channelled through NGOs (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017).

Recent reports on Malawi show that “corruption levels remain high with Transparency International ranking Malawi at 122/180 economies in 2017” (The World Bank, 2018), and that “donor funding remains constrained by governance concerns since the 2013 Cashgate scandal” (IMF, 2018). The outcomes of the factors related to Malawi Government’s political economy are significant in this research because of their impact, not only on the power dynamics and access to resources, among the stakeholders but also due to the way they affect trust and values in partnership relations. During field research for this thesis, there were continuing reports of further and current financial misappropriations (see Box1). The outcomes of the factors related to Malawi Government’s political economy are significant in this research because of their impact, not only on the power dynamics and access to resources among the stakeholders but also due to the way they affect trust and values in partnership relations.

#### **BOX 1**

Examples from Malawian newspaper reports on financial irregularities identified during the 8 week period between April – June, 2016, as well as other relevant articles reflecting their impact on domestic and international relations:

***Daily Times, May 5, 2016:*** Kw2 billion (£2,170,400 approx.) donated by the United States to fight HIV/Aids was stolen at the Ministry of Health.

***Sunday Times, May 8, 2016:*** Kw100 billion (£108,519,000 approx.) borrowed from an Indian Bank for the Green Belt Initiative had disappeared.

***The Business Times, May 11, 2016:*** Kw293 million (£318,000) stolen by public officers at the Malawi Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

***Sunday Times, May 8, 2016:*** Teachers Union challenge the Government over issues including payment of salary arrears, including those who were omitted on the payroll, outstanding salary adjustments for teachers who were promoted to higher grades since 2013.

***Malawi News, May 28 – June 3 2016:*** Joint Press Release by eight international aid agencies (including Oxfam, Actionaid, and Save the Children), registering their protest against the Government of Malawi’s intention to introduce payment for health services in public health facilities.



According to Adhikari (2016a, p. 11), subcontracting of projects and programmes by donor agencies is claimed to be in response to weaknesses in the capacity of the Malawian Government to deliver effectiveness and efficiency. However, the outsourcing of development programmes has created challenges for the government of Malawi that have resulted in “an internal brain drain, aid patronage, and competition amongst the agencies involved” (Adhikari, 2016b, p. 4).

Given the discourse on negotiation, trust, and power, the issues related to Malawi Government’s relationships with the international donor community and aid agencies are significant in this research and were used as the basis for choosing Malawi as the host country.

## 4.6 Research methods

A number of different methods were available, which I used for triangulation purposes to examine the chosen case studies, including fieldwork, semi-structured interviews (SSIs), observation, and document analysis. The methods for recording data included audio-recording of interviews, field notes and collection of documents. The flexibility of the case study approach allows for the use of all methods within the data-collection process and comparison within and across cases for research validity (Dooley, 2002, p. 338). The specific approach to explore the HCOs’ relationships with each of the categories of stakeholders is summarised in Table 6 below and is followed by an explanation for the choice of each method.

Category of stakeholder	Method/Fieldwork		
	Observation	SSIs	Document
The international volunteers	X	X	X
IVCO head office representative	X	X	X
The stakeholders in the institutional landscape of development in the host country	X	X	X

**Table 6:** Methods of data collection from each stakeholder category (Source: author)

Experiments, surveys, histories, analysis of archival records or economic trends are among the variety of options available to a researcher (Yin, 2003, p. 2). Each is a different way of collecting and analysing empirical evidence, but the most important condition for differentiating among the various research strategies is to identify the type of research question being asked (Yin, 2003, p. 7).

This research is about human relationships as viewed and interpreted through the perspectives of specific interviewees. Since my research was seeking to answer a ‘how’ question, it was possible to discount all the methods listed above (experiments, survey questionnaires, histories, and economic analysis) – except for archived records or document analysis. Alternative methods such as ethnographic charting, oral histories and construction of genealogies were also eliminated due to lack of relevance to this thesis.

#### ***4.6.1 Fieldwork***

Fieldwork refers to being present in the place or setting where the research takes place and undertaking all the activities necessary for data collection (Schwandt, 1997; Silverman, 2013). Face to face interactions, when carried out sensitively, can help manage expectations, reduce confusion or anxiety among the participants (Laws et al., 2003, p. 94). Consequently, fieldwork was the most appropriate strategy for my research, as it involved meeting with key individuals and institutions in their everyday situations, building relationships and confidence, and making the process of data collection simpler and more comfortable for them.

I considered using focus groups because interaction in focus groups “can produce invaluable data on how people think about an issue, their own explanations and understandings” (Laws et al., 2003, p. 300). However, after some consideration, I decided against using focus groups as a method because I felt that more in-depth and sensitive information could be obtained from interviewees if they were approached individually. While researching Malawi and before departure for fieldwork, I was introduced to the Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP), and their sister organisation, Malawi Scotland Partnership (MSaP), which proved to be invaluable support for this research. The Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) is “the national civil society network coordinating, supporting and representing the people-to-people links between our two nations. We represent a community of 109,000 Scots with active links to Malawi” (SMP, 2019). MaSP is a “Malawian-owned and Malawian-led network which exists to support and develop Malawi’s many civil society links with Scotland, thereby enhancing the cooperation between Malawi and Scotland Government on the one

hand and the North and South on the other” (MaSP, 2019). Through the offices of MaSP in Lilongwe, Malawi, I was provided with office space, and administrative support as well as a crucial formal introduction to key personnel in the host country offices of IVCOs, and other key IVS actors in public and the private sector in Malawi. These introductions which took place within the first week of my arrival included contact with relevant personnel in ministries, umbrella organisations, NGOs, INGOs and donor agencies associated with IVS and opened the doors for many more. Furthermore, I was invited to attend a series of bi-annual MaSP ‘Strand Meetings’ involving coordination of effort among some organisations reporting on new and current projects under the key headings of education, health, environment, civil society and sustainable economic development.

My fieldwork was extended to Germany when, after visiting the host country offices of GIZ, I received an invitation to visit and interview key personnel at GIZ head office in Bonn, Germany. This was followed by a further invitation to attend and participate in the IVCO International Forum Conference in October 2016, where I was able to meet and interview personnel from other IVCO head offices relevant to this study. However, not all IVCOs were as cooperative, and I experienced challenges in accessing staff and information from some IVCOs. Resistance to share information was experienced from one IVCO head office and another at HCO level. The potential significance of the diversity of responses from IVCOs towards this study was captured as observations (see section 4.6.3) in the data collection and analysis, and presented in the analytical Chapters 5, 6 and 7 where appropriate.

#### ***4.6.2 Interviews***

Interviews can provide insight and evidence in favour or against a particular matter, access to historical information relevant to the situation and help identify other relevant sources of evidence (Yin, 2003, p. 90). Consequently, key informant interviewing was also one of the methods I chose, reflecting the rationale regarding the suitability of informant interviews for ‘how’ research questions (Thomas, 1998; Dooley, 2002; Yin, 2003). Semi-structured interviews (SSIs) are

described as ‘conversation with a purpose’ intended to capture generated data (Webb and Webb, 1932; Ritchie, 2003; Yin, 2003). SSIs involve talking to people to gain insight into their perspectives while relying on the power of language to reveal how individuals construct their meanings (Legard et al., 2003). Yin (2003, p. 90) cautions that while the interviewer should adhere closely to the line of inquiry, asking the questions should be put forward in a ‘friendly’, ‘non-threatening’ and open-ended way (Yin, 2003, p. 90).

I tailored my interview guides to three groups: i) IVCO head office and HCO staff, the staff of donor agencies, government and partner organisations (Appendix 6), ii) representatives of beneficiary groups (Appendix 7) and iii) international volunteers (Appendix 8). On the occasions when it became possible to interview a member of IVCO head office staff, I used a separate interview guide containing a small number of additional questions. Appendix 6 shows the additional questions used for HCOs’ staff. I differentiated partner organisations’ employees from beneficiary groups through their involvement in the delivery and implementation of programmes rather than being the recipients of the services. Partner organisations included staff members of Malawian ministries, local government, public institutions, and umbrella organisations, as well as consultants and employees of INGOs who work with volunteers from the case study IVCOs. For the IVCO and partner organisation employee interviews, I used open-ended questions, addressing issues of definition, relationships, communications, outcomes or satisfaction. The interviews also addressed how the role of international volunteers was understood and interpreted by the interviewees, and how these interpretations shaped their expectations of IVS and its outcomes. Follow-up questions were inspired by a number of other relevant studies (Fowler, 1997; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Burns et al., 2015; Lough and Carter-Black, 2015).

In the approach to the beneficiary interviews, I adapted the guide and the questionnaire for those who receive the services of international volunteers. These interviews also focused on perceptions and expectations of the role of HCOs and other actors in the specific programme that they were involved with, and the nature and quality of interactions between the different stakeholders. In

formulating the interview guide for volunteers, I used the same pattern as that for the partner interviews but with emphasis on relationships with the HCOs' staff and other host country colleagues that supported or constrained their activities (Appendices 5 -8). All interviews were audio-recorded with the formal consent of the participants. Table 7 shows the number of interviewees in each stakeholder category and their positions in their respective organisations or groups.

Organisation	Position	Number	Total
IVCO HQ x 5	International programme coordinator	1	5
Host country office x 5	Country director	1	5
	Programme managers	1	5
Partner organisation - 1 per IVCO	Senior officer	1	5
	Counterpart to volunteer*	1	5
Beneficiary group - 1 per IVCO	Senior person	1	5
	Counterpart to volunteer	1	5
	Member	1	5
International volunteers - 2 per IVCO	Linked to the project	2	10
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>45</b>

**Table 7:** The numbers and categories of interviewees (Source: author)

\* Counterparts to volunteers are likely to be either at the organisation or beneficiary group level, but not both.

During the fieldwork, interviewing members of beneficiary groups in three different geographical locations presented a challenge as I did not speak the language of the participants. I, therefore, had to consider the possibility of engaging interpreters or assistants. An interpreter's role would be to simply but precisely translate my questions, and the participants response to those question, while a research assistant might play a more active role by asking their own questions and perhaps leading the interview, providing they understand the purpose of the research (Laws et al., 2003, p. 256). This distinction is important because often concepts do not translate directly from one language to another so knowing how questions are understood in the local language is critical to the success of the interview (Laws et al., 2003, p. 256). I, therefore, opted for engaging research assistants rather than interpreters. Lewis (2003, p. 65) considers the matching of researcher and participants on key socio-demographic criteria as useful to the process of data collection since cultural insight or experience can "enhance the researcher's understanding of participants accounts, of the language they use and of nuances and sub-texts." On the other hand, social or cultural proximity may lead to a lack of depth or clarification on issues being pursued by the researcher due to assumptions based

on shared experiences, or the participants may consider it unnecessary to give full accounts, relying on the interviewer to draw on their own background (Lewis, 2003, p. 66). Furthermore, it is also recognised that informants can be susceptible to personal prejudices, poor recollection or inaccurate articulation of issues; therefore, it is necessary to corroborate with data from other sources.

In balancing the pros and cons of engaging research assistants or interpreters, I had to also reflect on the implications of my own presence during the interviews. While appreciating that sometimes people are more likely to talk more freely to an outsider, I recognised that being a white, Western visitor to Malawi potentially situated me in a position of power imbalance with the interviewees, as well as the research assistants. Such a situation might not have encouraged open dialogue and participants, including the research assistants, might have felt it necessary to modify their behaviour, and responses, in my presence. To achieve optimum consistency, it was therefore important that I select and train individuals who could reliably conduct the interviews as closely aligned to the intended aims. Through contacts with the Centre for Social Research at the University of Malawi, I was introduced to a number of students from each of the three locations, whom I interviewed and selected three candidates. I provided each candidate with a copy of the Research Terms of Reference (Appendix 11) and blank consent forms (Appendix 5), which I explained to them in the context of training for research, allowing for questions and answers during and after each session. I then gave them copies of the questionnaire, as an interview guide for SSIs that they were responsible for, which we then rehearsed several times, using academic colleagues as substitute participants. I ensured that research assistants were compensated for their travel costs and a small subsistence allowance, plus a nominal fee for the transcription of any audio recordings. The performance of two of the research assistants was exceptional as their interest in the research prompted some deeper and valid questions. On balance, I found the results of interviews carried out by the research assistants to be satisfactory, especially as the level of sensitivity of the questions did not require, or provoke, distortion of responses.

### ***4.6.3 Observation***

Observation activities focus on the collection of naturally occurring data through the observation of events, behaviours, norms and verbal and non-verbal interactions between people being studied as well as with relevant ‘visitors’ such as the volunteers and representatives from partner organisations (Ritchie, 2003; Schwandt, 1997; Yin, 2003). Systematic observation involves the researcher taking part in the daily routine of a social setting and recording observations and experiences and is useful when the study requires cross-checking different participants’ account of what is happening (Coffey, 2006; Silverman, 2013). Observation may not provide insight into people’s motivation for doing things, but it can deliver a record of “what people do, as distinct from what they say they do” (Laws et al., 2003, p. 305). In this research, I used observation as an informal method: no interview situation was entered into specifically for observation purposes. Direct observations proved helpful as I was able to not only hear about relationships and interactions among people who work alongside each other in their everyday work, but to observe their behaviours towards each other and those external to their own working environment. My observations also included types and quality of non-verbal communication such as posters, calendars, noticeboards and their contents, and speed and quality of response to e-mails, telephone calls, visitors and appointment. The setting of the offices, and what information they imparted about their occupants, as well as the availability and access to resources for the staff to do their work were included in observations. I recorded observations from meetings with specific participants in a ‘Contact Summary Form’ (Appendix 9), and noted general observations in a personal diary that I kept during the fieldwork. These were archived for reference and used during data analysis to critically assess participant responses.

Attending the MaSP Strand Meetings soon after my arrival in Malawi provided me with a much-valued insight into the context and mechanics of development in Malawi. Both, the Strand meetings and the IVCO Forum Conference in Bonn gave me an appreciation of who the key players in IVS are on a global scale, and what the relationships and power balances among

development agencies might look like. I recorded my observations after each contact and daily and they formed a valuable part of my data analysis.

#### ***4.6.4 Document review***

My final research method was document analysis; a form of collecting data aimed at investigating any historical events and experiences which may be reflected in the current context (Yin, 2003; Wharton, 2006). Having conducted a comprehensive literature review, I felt it important to use a variety of sources of information to construct a broader understanding of the historical, social, political, and economic factors relevant to this research. O’Laughlin (1998, p. 112) notes that it is easier to spot assumptions and incomplete arguments from interviewees if something about the context, region and specific circumstances of those being interviewed is already known. My document review included examining grey material such as policy-orientated reports prepared for and by governmental and non-governmental agencies (O’Laughlin, 1998, p. 111) to access information about the IVCOs, HCOs and other IVS stakeholders. Reading about the aims and strategies of each of the IVCOs under examination, using reports, web-based and hard copy material before departure, provided a rich contextual background for my understanding during this research. During fieldwork in Malawi, I also relied on national daily newspapers to keep myself informed and updated on relevant issues. Where possible, subject to authorisation and accessibility, I collected other types of documents in Malawi such as organisational charts for HCOs, minutes of meetings, workshops or seminars, placement descriptions for international volunteers, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between HCOs and partner organisations related to IVS, brochures, programme descriptions and regional development programmes from regional or local government authorities in Malawi.

It is important to contextualise grey material itself; such documents must be treated in the same way as other key informants in an investigative process (O’Laughlin, 1998, p. 118). Political issues can shape the language of a report; the background of authors can mould a document’s findings; the conclusions may be affected by limitations in a product’s term of reference (O’Laughlin, 1998,



p. 121). To address these potential pitfalls, any document that I reviewed as a background context for the IVCOs, or other IVS actors in this research, I only used when I could find a link with direct relevance to the research. The approach I took during analysis was to report the content and the context in which it was written or presented, allowing the information to be interpreted in a meaningful way to answer the central research question.

#### ***4.6.5 Field notes and data transcription***

The use of research diaries and incorporating data transcription into the data collection process is recognised as an important part of ensuring rigour in a qualitative study (Ritchie et al., 2003; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Silverman, 2013). Indeed, Braun and Clarke (2006) consider the process of transcription a useful way for the researcher to become familiarised with the data. Others argue it should be seen as a critical part of the data collection and analysis where meanings are constructed, rather than a mechanical creation of the record of a conversation (Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999; Bird, 2005), while Jupp (2006) emphasises the importance of standardization to maintain consistency in the final products. In this research, in almost all cases I transcribed the audio-recordings myself, except the few that were carried out in local language by the research assistants and a small number that were contracted to a professional transcriber in light of time constraints.

There are a variety of different practices that can be grouped as research diaries. I used daily field reports, which, like field notes, are records of observations made in a particular setting. I found these two processes useful, as they informed and shaped my fieldwork as it progressed.

Importantly, it was on the basis of these processes, as well as additional literature review, that I decided to incorporate the concept of boundary organisations in the theoretical framework.

### **4.7 Data analysis**

Data analysis is “a process of taking things apart and putting them together again...[and] linking the material from respondents with the original questions” (Laws et al., 2003, p. 381). Data analysis is not a linear process but an iterative one, involving unpacking the collected data to examine,

categorise, review, test, and recombine evidence to address the initial proposition of the study (Yin, 2003). The power of qualitative data is in the concepts and innate meanings which emerge as themes in the data sets (Laws et al., 2003, p. 377).

The challenge in multiple-case research is to manage the volume of data in a way that achieves a balance between focusing on the research objective and the rich empirical evidence that supports the theory (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 29). On the other hand, a cross-case approach to the analysis of data not only narrows down the particular situations in which data occur but also helps to identify how the different conditions may be related. Thus it increases the potential for generalizability to other contexts (Miles et al., 2014). A number of approaches are available for cross-case analysis, of which I found a case-orientated approach (Ragin, 1987) most appropriate for this research because it involves considering the case as a single unit but looking for similarities, differences, causes and effects within the case, and only then looking at a limited level of comparative study.

Using HCOs as the unit of analysis, I looked for patterns (convergences, divergences, causes and effects) in their intra- and inter-organisational relationships, with the three categories of stakeholders, within the data. I examined data from each HCO to noted underlying similarities, associations and differences in the way they negotiated relationships within and outside their parent organisations. The diverse and richly detailed organisational and behavioural profiles were then compared with outcomes of the relationships, first within a single unit (HCO), and then compared across cases to form more general explanations (Miles et al., 2014). Thus the initial set of analytical elements consisted of cross-sectional labels and categories (Spencer et al., 2003, p. 203) applied across the entire data set to facilitate searching and saving portions of data which were refined throughout the processes of analysis to reflect emerging pattern or clustering of data. During the analysis, attention was also paid to non-cross-sectional data (Spencer et al., 2003, p. 203) which involves looking out for specific themes which might have needed a different type of conceptualisation. This approach allowed me to disaggregate relevant data for detailed scrutiny of

particular elements, before reconstructing them into a new shape and order in the context in which they occurred (Denzin, 2001).

The methodology I employed for data collection involved the use of stories and perspectives of individual participants to attempt at recreating a snapshot of the situation, while also using different methods to triangulate and balance the responses. Adopting a case orientated approach (Ragin, 1987) to cross-case analysis of data, I used MAXQDA12 software to facilitate the capture of emerging themes, concepts or categories within the data (Dooley, 2002; Ritchie et al., 2003; Spencer et al., 2003; Yin, 2003; Braun and Clarke, 2006). I examined each transcription, document, observation and field notes, including my own opinions in accordance with the principles of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves the researcher looking for, and identifying, patterns and trends within the data, check what data fits this pattern; where and why are there exceptions; and if there are any gaps where expected information should be, what might be the reasons and whether data can be collected to fill the gap (Laws et al., 2003, p. 283). However, it was important to take a flexible approach to data analysis in order to avoid overlooking the presence of unanticipated themes or patterns of behaviour.

Choice of criteria and themes and concepts in data analysis is reliant on the intuition and personal judgment of the researcher rather than on technical systems and procedures (Dooley, 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Consequently, the iterative process of data analysis also includes reflective practice by the researcher and the constant need to revisit the original data for new clues, check assumptions and identify underlying factors as new insights emerge from the analytical processes (Spencer et al., 2003, p. 213). The next sub-section describes the process by which I considered reflexivity in the analysis of data.

#### ***4.7.1 Reflexivity and my position as the researcher***

In considering my own role in this research, I had to confront the pros and cons of my personal and professional background. My past knowledge and experiences provided me with diverse

perspectives that not only led me to the original idea for this research, but maintained, and further developed its focus. My research is solidly founded on my own experience and insights gained as a professional in international corporate management, and a development practitioner, working as and with volunteers and HCOs' staff. In addition, my personal history as a migrant has helped me develop culturally transferable interpersonal skills. Thus I was able to find similarities, and create empathy and understanding, with diverse participants during my fieldwork, and be considered as committed to the interests of the project, having the knowledge and legitimacy to lead the research. In this way, my experiences resulted in a rich, complex understanding of the varied mix of participants that I interacted with and, at the same time, deepened my understanding of my own life, and my own experiences to heighten my comprehension of theirs. Consequently, I produced a unique critical reflection on the characteristics, contribution and recognition of members of HCO staff, their networks of key individuals in partner organisations, beneficiary groups, volunteers, and in some cases, senior staff at IVCO head offices.

My identity as a sympathetic outsider, the critical line taken in my research towards ideas of development, my prior experience as a volunteer and genuine interest in IVS helped to locate the research closer to HCO staff and volunteers who are more focused on IVS and might have felt excluded from the research focused on development issues. During the fieldwork in Malawi, I was perceived as someone with a background in development, as well as conversant with the goals and challenges of organisational administration and management, and therefore, sympathetic to the concerns of the interviewees with regards to both the organisational, and the development aspects of IVS. Both of these positions were genuine, and my research benefited from the enthusiasm and support of all the participants and their diverse perspectives.

To ensure maximum self-critical and reflectivity, I kept a diary and index of academic and grey literature which I revisited throughout the research, during fieldwork and data collection and analysis. This was to make certain that facts had not been distorted through time and lapses of

memory and retained the integrity of the research as well as serving as tools for the triangulation of findings.

In presenting results of data analysis against the main themes of the theoretical framework, I have used the following formatting tools to bring the written text closer to the spoken words of the interviewees:

- Where an interviewee has intentionally emphasised a word or phrase by a change in the tone of speech, this is shown in bold italic typeset.
- IVCO host country offices in Malawi are conversationally referred to by the name of the organisation. To protect the anonymity of the respondents and maintain neutrality in reporting the findings, references to IVCO host country offices are presented as [HCO]. However, the international body of the IVCOs are coded IVCOs1 - 5 to preserve anonymity

Table 8 below shows the coding system used in this research to protect the anonymity of participants:

Code	Interviewee
MW	A senior staff member of a Malawian government or public institution.
HCO	A senior staff member of an HCO
PTNR	A colleague who could be a consultant, contractor, or Malawian colleague in a partner organisation, working with an international volunteer
HQ	A senior staff member working at IVCO head office
VOL	International Volunteer
BG	Member of a beneficiary group
CPRT	Formally appointed Malawian counter-part working with the volunteer

**Table 8:** Coding system for interviewees (Source: author)

## 4.8 Challenges, dilemmas and ethical considerations

Several challenges were faced during the process of this research. The most significant was balancing my knowledge of management in international organisations and experiences of international volunteering with the necessary objectivity required to conduct this study. My initial default position was to identify points of weakness and inefficiencies in the IVS processes and examine how they could be transformed into meaningful outcomes for the intended beneficiaries of

IVS, by capitalising on the strengths and potentials of international volunteering. On the other hand, this default position steered my thought processes through the range and volume of literature that I reviewed, which eventually led to the formulation of the research question. It is, therefore, relevant to acknowledge that my personal and professional experiences enabled me to question the absence of reference to the role of HCOs in the literature that addresses the historical background, the multi-level and multi-stakeholder dimensions, and the challenges of volunteer management in IVS processes.

In spite of IVCOs' awareness of the challenges of decentralised governance in international organisations, I experienced difficulties in gaining access to key personnel and information related to the host country offices of some of the IVCOs during data collection for this research. This resonated with a similar situation experienced by Porter (2003, p. 132) who found that their research focus "at the 'coal face' with local NGOs and their field workers disconcerted – possibly even alienated – some of the northern NGOs." It was further reinforced by comments from an IVCO 2016 Forum participant who alluded to the presence of numerous internal reports and suggested that IVCOs are aware of these tensions but prefer to keep these matters in-house, to avoid alarming donors with issues that may be construed as organisational weaknesses.

The interview processes and approach to IVCOs, their HCOs, public sector institutions and partner organisations which might have been daunting on arrival in Malawi were quickly overcome with support from the National Coordinator and staff of the MaSP who provided contact details for many of the senior HCO staff as well as initiating my first contact in some cases. Their facilitation ensured that I gained access to high-level personnel in different organisations and enhanced my credibility as a professional researcher, which would probably have been more difficult had I approached the same people personally. Nevertheless, due to the last-minute cancellation, I was unable to interview HCO participants from the Peace Corps, although due to programme overlaps with other IVCOs, it was possible to interview the staff of partner organisations, volunteers, Malawian counterparts and beneficiaries participating in Peace Corps IVS programmes. There was

also the possibility that my research could strike a sensitive chord for the interviewees on a personal level, given the seniority of their roles, or they may be concerned that views expressed by them might be interpreted differently by audiences outside their own organisation.

Ethical considerations are paramount in the conduct of this research as it involves the collection of data from people and organisations. The principles of impartiality and respect are recognised in the literature as well as endorsed by the university and national ethical guidelines for conducting human research. These principles matched my own moral values, which are shaped by my life experience and cultural upbringing. Consequently, in the interest of safeguarding these principles, I adopted a range of measures such as consent forms, approval certificates and confidentiality and anonymity agreement (Clayton, 2013, p. 511). I prepared a protocol for the research, detailing the methods, nature of the information being sought, the number, and types of participants, for each type of data collection activity and included an assessment of the types of issues that may arise. The protocol was submitted to the OU Ethics Committee for approval, together with forms for obtaining consent and obtained approval before travel to Malawi (approval number: HREC/2015/2085/Barzegar/1). I also secured authorisation to conduct social research in Malawi (Appendix 10) before travel from Professor Chinsinga, Director at the Centre for Social Research, Chancellor College, the University of Malawi in Zomba. The necessary steps for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality were designed into the research schedule. I prepared a one-page Terms of Reference (TOR), document (Appendix 11) as a hand out to give to each participant which I could also use as the basis for introduction before each interview. I developed an Informed Consent Form (Appendix 5) to explain the intended purpose, form, and content of each interview and the rights of each participant, from whom a signed consent form was obtained upon agreement to participate.

On the positive side, my observations showed all interviewees were relaxed and comfortable during and after the interviews, and many encouraged me to return or join them in other professional or social activities that extended the opportunities for making new contacts, as well as further

observations and follow up questions. The meeting with GIZ in Bonn and attending the IVCO Forum conference also confirmed that the same enthusiasm for participating, and interest in the findings of this research was shared by the head office staff of at least three IVCOs in this study.

## 4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed discussion of the methodology and methods, as well as the steps that I have taken to ensure the validity and reliability of my study. Having outlined the epistemological basis, the methodological approach, the methods and the research strategy I have used to carry out this research. Through my selection of the participants, I have tried to create a balanced picture of the organisations, the people associated with them, and the work that they carry out. Thus the research was able to access data from people with strong opinions, as well as others who do not hold strong opinions but carry assumptions about IVS policies and practices. I have demonstrated how triangulation in the data analysis and presentation has assured a balance of responses and a thorough assessment of the themes and research questions.

Some of the challenges and opportunities of researching IVS have been discussed in this chapter, including time constraints and challenges in accessing key personnel and information in some organisations. Some of the ethical dilemmas highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of researching a white European in an African country, as well as using research assistants to help overcome language barriers were also presented, centring on the importance of the construction of trust and listening skills.

Overall, the methods used and the processes of fieldwork, and data analysis, from conceptualisation through to implementation, were critical to the successful completion of the research. In the following chapters, the details of the data findings from the methodology and methods are set out.



## **Chapter 5**

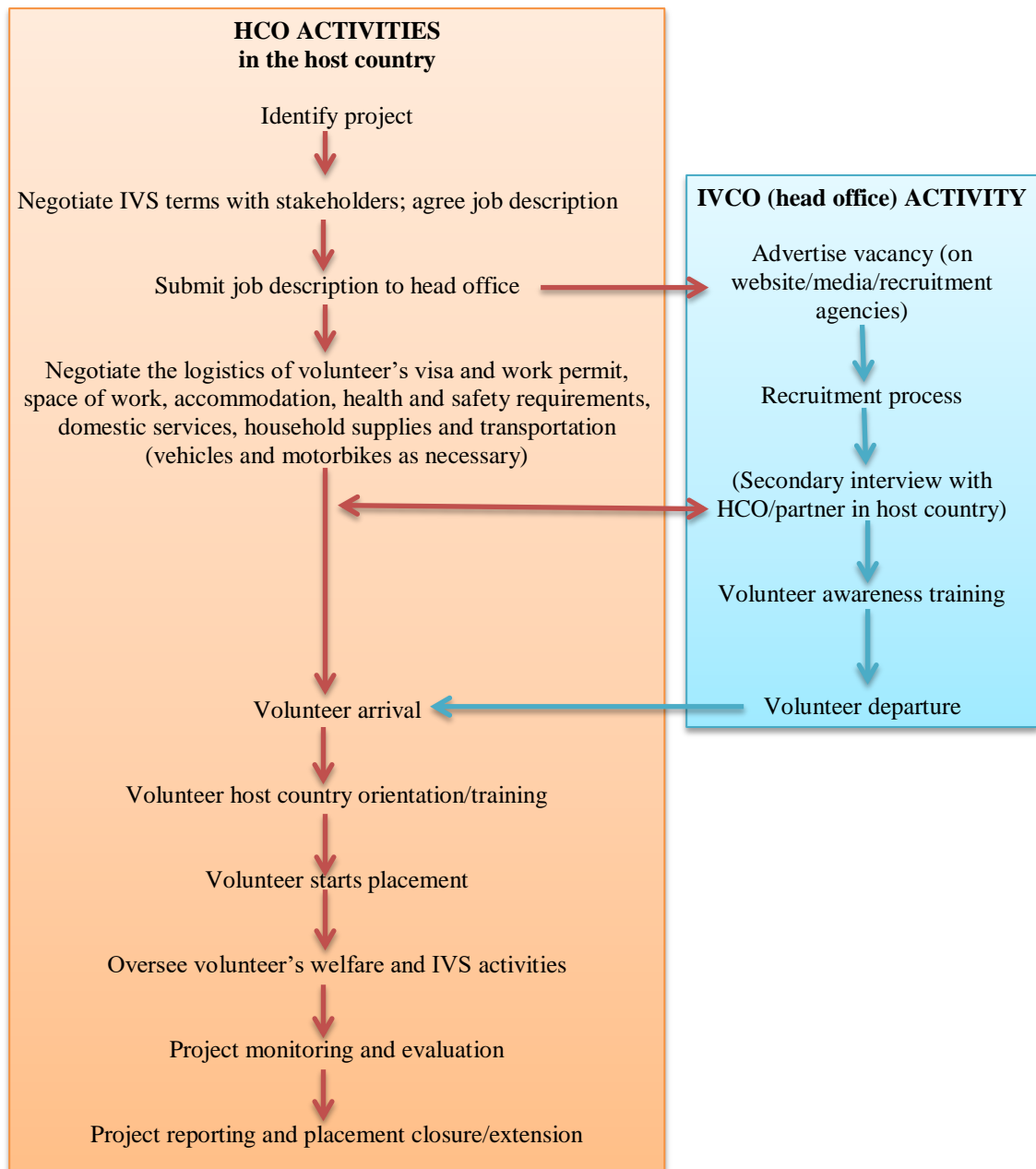
### **Negotiating the Relationships with the Volunteers through the Project Cycle**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the relationships between HCOs and the volunteers and how these relationships impact on the day to day work of the staff of the HCOs as well as the volunteers. Although volunteers are not the focus of this thesis, they are key stakeholders of IVS and how HCOs relate to them is of crucial importance. Since the focus of this section is to explore the factors that shape the relationships between the HCOs and the volunteers in Malawi, it takes a bird's eye view of the HCOs' relationships with other stakeholders (such as partner organisations and beneficiary groups) which are analysed in-depth in Chapter 7.

This chapter argues that the negotiation of the relationships between the HCO staff and the volunteers is affected by the diversity of perspectives on volunteering, whether the organisational focus of the IVCO is on development or volunteer placement, and the volunteers' contrasting expectations of the professional, personal and administrative support that HCOs can provide. It shows that the relationships between the HCOs and the volunteers are informed by institutional and characteristic-based types of trust and shaped by unequal power over resources and power to influence, all of which contribute to what and how information is exchanged between the HCOs, the volunteers and their co-workers in partner organisations. Figure 6 below is reproduced from Chapter 1 (figure 1), to illustrate the way this chapter follows the key steps involved in typical processes of setting up an IVS placement. In doing so, it examines the types of trust, power relations and knowledge sharing that shape the relationships between the HCOs with, and around the volunteers. The chapter takes its starting point by examining how HCOs mediate the conflicting perceptions, and stakeholder understandings, of volunteering (Chapter 2, section 2.7) at the initial stages of IVS. It then turns to focus on the justification and planning of a volunteer placement, agreeing the terms and conditions with partner organisations and formulating the job description

for the volunteer recruitment process. It then moves on to examine how HCOs negotiate the relationships with the volunteers during the placement and concludes with a brief look at the placement evaluation and closure at the end of the post.



**Figure 6:** A generalised representation of the typical processes involved in setting up an IVS placement (Source: author)

This chapter shows that the combined effects of experiences and accumulation of realised or unrealised expectations build upon existing beliefs and understandings of volunteering among individual actors, creating some perspectives of international volunteers that necessitate reconciliation. Geographical distance limits opportunities for process-based trust to develop before

the start of an IVS placement; hence there is an over-reliance on institutional and characteristic-based types of trust that impacts on knowledge sharing between HCOs and the volunteers. Expectations of IVS are also promoted through IVCO descriptions of the role of the HCOs, with the intention of establishing credibility and a sense that they are trustworthy and reliable by drawing on institutional and characteristic-based trust in existing and potential IVS stakeholders, including volunteers. Consequently, how closely the expectations built on information exchange before the placement match the realities on the ground, shape the relationships between the HCOs and the volunteers. An HCO's ability to manage the volunteers' expectations in a realistic way facilitates positive relationships, process-based trust-building and cooperative behaviours, while disparities between the volunteers' expectations and experiences on the ground diminish institutional and characteristic-based trust and are likely to lead to conflict in the relationships between the HCOs and the volunteers.

HCOs have to mediate the interdependence in their relationships with the volunteers because volunteers have sets of complementary powers over different types of resources and powers to influence the aims and processes of IVS. Since the literature on international volunteering does not offer specific insight into the management of geographically and culturally diverse volunteers (Chapter 2, section 2.7), this chapter draws on relevant literature on boundary organisation (Chapter 2, section 2.6) to explore the challenges that HCOs face in the management and coordination of international volunteers. It also examines the gaps in the discussions by looking at how the formal (organisational structures, policies and procedures) and informal (relationships and behaviours) organisational drivers for managing volunteers influence the types of trust and power relations in the way HCOs work with the international volunteers, and their consequences on the relationships of the volunteers with the people that they work with.

**Section 5.2** looks at the context of volunteering in Malawi. It shows that the proliferation of how international volunteers are described, as well as the growth in the number of qualified and skilled Malawian professionals, has affected the way the volunteers, and the people with whom they

interact daily, perceive the role of IVS in development. Ambiguities in terminology mean that the relationships between the HCOs, the volunteers and their co-workers are founded on institutional and characteristic-based types of trust, and assumptions of power over resources and power to influence, that build upon existing beliefs and understandings of volunteering among individual actors.

**Section 5.3** argues that the relationship between the HCOs' staff and the volunteers is influenced by the way the primary organisational focus of the IVCO is declared by head office and enacted by the HCO. It looks at how IVCOs' organisational focus affects the approach HCOs take to assess potential IVS placement opportunities, and examines how HCOs negotiate the relationships in the project-orientated investigations that lead to the formulation and offer of an IVS placement to an international volunteer. Finally, this section looks specifically at the way the job descriptions and the terms and conditions of IVS placements are formulated and described, compared to the realities of the roles on the ground.

**Section 5.4** shows that the relationships between HCOs' staff and the volunteers during their placements are influenced by the ability of the HCOs to provide volunteers with professional support and oversee their health and welfare. The section looks at how, as boundary managers, HCOs negotiate the relationships that involve power over resources, and power to influence, in providing the professional and personal support that the volunteers expect. It then examines how power relations affect, and are affected by different types of trust and how knowledge is shared between the HCOs and the volunteers.

**Section 5.5** turns to look at the part review and placement closure processes play in the relationships between the HCOs, and their relevance to volunteer retention as a positive indicator of effective volunteer management. It reveals a link between successful volunteer management in an IVS context, with HCOs' having the necessary power over resources and administrative skills to deliver their mandate. The absence of the means to adequately oversee and review IVS activities

can lead to volunteers complaining, working independently or leaving; all of which have serious implications for the HCO and the project in which the volunteers are working.

**Section 5.6** summarises the findings and concludes the chapter by reflecting on the roles of trust and power in the relationship between the HCO staff and the volunteers.

## **5.2 Negotiating the diverse perspectives of international volunteering in Malawi**

This section shows that contradictory perceptions of volunteering between the HCOs, the volunteers and the Malawian stakeholders who are associated with placing international volunteers, can sometimes lead to tensions and mistrust between HCOs and volunteers. HCOs are faced with having to mediate conflicting perceptions of volunteering with the volunteers as well as the Malawian stakeholders. Moreover, some of the staff of the HCO may, themselves be sensitive to these contradictory perspectives.

The terminology applied to development volunteering has expanded in the past decades from its original association with ‘charity’ and ‘need’, and towards ‘technical assistance’ and ‘professional support’, in response to the changing landscape of development assistance (Chapter 2, section 2.3). However, volunteering is recognised as an “expression of natural and social solidarity of man....in both traditional and modern societies” (Beigbeder, 1991, p. 104) and is how the institutional value of volunteering continues to be perceived in Malawi:

*“In Malawi, it is widely known that volunteerism is the foundation and glue that keeps the traditional societies together. The local name for volunteerism in Malawi is Kudzipereka<sup>23</sup> ...[as an] expression of people’s voluntary engagement in community activities.” (UNV, 2016a)*

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<sup>23</sup> Translated as: commitment, dedicate, surrender, dedication, devotion, sincerity, consecration

As an example, since HIV/AIDS remains at epidemic levels in Malawi (UNAIDS, 2017), Malawian volunteers<sup>24</sup> are commonly encouraged to take part in HIV/AIDS prevention programmes within or close to their own communities, particularly in rural and remote areas (HCO 3, PTNR 6, CPRT7, 8) and are sometimes ‘rewarded’ by T-shirts and traditional cloth (HCO 3):

*“When we ask [local Malawian volunteers] what motivates you to be a volunteer, some of them say when I bring change in my community, everybody recognises me as a valuable person; if I go to church and there isn’t any seat they find a seat for me .... You find that those people are the real change agents because they are convinced from inside out.”* (HCO 3)

However, when some of the Malawian volunteers were offered as little as 50 Kw<sup>25</sup> as a gesture of goodwill for travelling outside of their communities, it caused grievance among others who did not receive the same (CPRT 8). The reaction to international volunteering is therefore not surprising; there are suggestions that the meaning of the term ‘international volunteer’ is increasingly undervalued by IVS stakeholders, including the volunteers themselves:

*“For our volunteers, the term ‘volunteerism’ [means] you work, and you get **nothing** ... So our [local volunteering] programmes have not been successful, because.... after a month the [volunteers] will say... “How do we sustain our lives?.... We need food; we need accommodation; we need soap.” ..... But I don’t know how these [international volunteers] are being supported.... to stay here for one year [sic]? Who is supporting them with accommodation, food, everything?”* (CPRT 8)

*“[If a qualified person] is called a volunteer, but [receives] other benefits, like what our [international] counterparts are getting as volunteers... [it] could be even [equal to] the salary [that some Malawians] are getting.”* (CPRT 7)

What the above quotations show is that in a country where 50 Kw can make a difference to whether a person can eat or not, the Malawians’ mistrust in the application of volunteer terminology is not only directed at individual volunteers but at the organisations or institutions that support the

<sup>24</sup> The Malawian home-country volunteers described here function outside of the IVCO structures and organisations

<sup>25</sup> Currency exchange rate at the time of field research: £1 = 921.5 MKw, therefore 50Kw is the equivalent of a fraction of 1p

international volunteers. Participants perceive IVS as contradictory to the characteristics of volunteering in the sense that is locally applied to Malawians. It suggests that international volunteers are perceived as privileged because they receive allowances, equating to salaries that are denied to Malawian volunteers.

Many Malawians working alongside volunteers are baffled by conflicting perspectives of ‘volunteers’ and ‘volunteering’:

*“What’s the role of [an international] volunteer? The question is, is it just to contribute, or to get something out of it? ‘Who benefits most?’ is the question at the end of the day for me... is it that they’re getting more out of you than you are getting from them?”* (PTNR 3)

*“There is lack of information. People don’t know how to....do [IVS] volunteering work in Malawi... How someone can be a volunteer [sic]? What is involved? When....in UK, you say ‘I’m a volunteer’, what does it entail? What does it mean to be a volunteer in Africa?”* (PTNR 6)

The above statements demonstrate the confusion that co-workers feel in trying to understand the underlying principles of IVS. Despite using the term volunteer, participant (PTNR 6) is making a distinction between what is understood as volunteering in Malawi and the type of volunteering - IVS - that foreign volunteers do.

*“Volunteers [that] are living in the village; they are **volunteers**! But there are volunteers [who] are like: ‘Hey, let’s go to Africa and improve my CV’.”* (PTNR 1)

*“[Some of our volunteers] are very highly qualified; some [are] doctors [and] retired professors... [who wish to] go and experience; go and ‘give’.”* (HQ 5)

The descriptions above illustrate that international volunteers are driven by different motivations and expectations of their IVS placement. This makes the basis for forming both professional and personal trusting relationships more problematic since it makes the understanding of the volunteers’ expectations of their IVS role and the subsequent formulation of a satisfactory response to their demands more difficult.

*“[The word volunteer] is a loaded word. It suggests something which is incorrect; it’s not the truth. UN’s definition of volunteering is reflective of the community that you live in [and] support, not for financial reasons.....[But in IVS] people come for different reasons.....so motivations of people joining [IVCO] are very, very complicated.” (HCO 4)*

Interviews with volunteers confirmed the diversity of motivation among them, for example, some considered the opportunity as an opening into a career in international development (VOL 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 16); some were exercising a career break before deciding what to do next (VOL 5, 13, 15, 18); others - mainly older, or more experienced volunteers - wanted to share their skills and knowledge in a useful way (VOL 3, 11, 14), while a few had made IVS a form of ‘career’ spanning several years’ service in different countries (VOL1, 7, 8, 10). The diversity of motivations of volunteers add to the complexities of formal and informal relationships that HCOs have to negotiate, not only in their own relationships with the volunteers but also between volunteers and the IVS stakeholders since actors are unable to ‘read’ each other’s motives.

*“[Volunteers come] for different reasons...Those that are too altruistic are not concerned about their own welfare... people with strong faith, [who] feel that they’ve been ‘called’ ....I’ve seen situations, where people have wanted to develop their particular experience in a context that has, may be limited laws and regulations.” (HCO 4)*

*“Some [volunteers] understand what they should ask or how they have to behave...But then there is another group that behaves like secondary school students....[Then you find] staff also complaining: “What do the volunteers want?”” (HCO 8)*

These complexities point to the challenges that HCOs face in negotiating their relationships with the volunteers and concur with Olekalns and Smith’s (2009, p. 347) observation that it is not always possible to recognise the goals and intentions of the other actors. Uncertainty has implications on forms of trust and power relations in relationships and shapes how actors share knowledge and information with each other (Butler, 1999). When one party has considerably more information than the other, it becomes difficult to analyse the potentials for optimising opportunities and minimising risk within the relationship (Koeszegi, 2004). However, opportunities for building trust between HCOs and the volunteers are limited by geographical distance and



potentially cultural mismatch which is difficult to assess before the volunteers' arrival in the host country.

*“One issue that we see...[is when] we get somebody who may have gone through the interview and the screening process excellently, but then they get there, and they are not ready, they are not able to perform that role because probably [they had] different expectations.” (HQ 5)*

*“I’m based [in the office], and I get to hear all the comments [from the HCO staff] in Chichewa<sup>26</sup>, [like]... “This [volunteer] is coming from Uganda; what is he running away from? Why did he want to come here?” ....or “these [volunteers] are acting like they want salaries.”” (VOL 17)*

Assumptions based on cultural norms, past personal experiences and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, race and ethnic origin also shape the expectations of both the HCO staff and the volunteers of each other. They are increasingly pertinent given the growing trend which has extended the historic North-South volunteering practice of IVS also to include engaging national volunteers and South-South volunteering<sup>27</sup>.

*“Volunteers come from different countries and backgrounds; what works for [one] doesn’t work for the other ....because they have different expectations ... [So] how I communicate to a UK volunteer is different to how I communicate to an African volunteer...which is a challenge.” (HCO 6)*

*“The other problem currently is that we do have East African volunteers...To them, it’s not volunteering; it’s a job....The low paying jobs go to those [volunteers] who aren’t good enough.... [Because we don’t pay high allowances] we get low, poor skilled [volunteers] and that has an effect on the work.” (HCO 8)*

The two statements above illustrate tensions between HCO staff and volunteers from the global South that necessitate specific considerations in IVS policy-making. The challenges are recognised in the literature on MNCs (Chapter 2, section 2.5) where discrepancies in parent/subsidiary

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<sup>26</sup> Chichewa is the main language of Malawi

<sup>27</sup> The exception being UNV which has advocated South-South volunteering from inception

relations can be linked to physical and cultural distance, and levels and types of trust in relationships which are discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

Perceptions of volunteering can either strengthen or undermine institutional trust in volunteers or the aims of IVS, depending on the description of the role and the remuneration package. The dilemma is noticeably apparent in the quotations below:

*“[As a volunteer, the way] you are handled...and treated by the partner, and the perception around your volunteering is quite different. [But when it is called ‘Development Worker’] ....you are a professional; the concept of volunteering doesn’t come out ...As a volunteer, the partner....first looks at you as a volunteer then looks at your skills.” (VOL 8)*

*“We pay our volunteers ... [a low amount] a month. But...[other IVCOs] pay [their volunteers] a thousand dollars a month.... Now, what does that mean? It means the quality of our volunteers is not good enough... So the best [volunteers] will go for the high paying volunteer jobs.” (HCO 8)*

The use of the phrase ‘high paying volunteer jobs’ by participant HCO 8 reinforces the perceived blurring of the boundary between volunteering and employment; the participant also implies that there is an association between the level of volunteer allowances with volunteers’ skills and expertise (‘quality’ in the above statement).

This section has shown that contradictory perceptions of volunteering between the HCOs, the volunteers and the Malawian stakeholders who are associated with placing international volunteers, can sometimes lead to tensions among the stakeholders. This can generate disappointment and mistrust between the HCO staff and the volunteers which the HCOs are not always able to reconcile. In delivering their mandate of placing volunteers, HCOs are faced with having to mediate these conflicting perceptions of volunteering with both their Malawian staff and other IVS stakeholders.

### **5.3 Negotiating, formulating and planning for volunteer placements**

This section argues that the relationship between the HCOs' staff and the volunteers is influenced by congruity between the way the primary organisational focus of the IVCO is stated by head office and enacted by the HCO. This section links Impey and Overton's (2014) terminology of supply-driven and demand-driven IVS placements, to whether the approach HCOs take to the identification, justification and incorporation of IVS placements in development interventions is development-focused or placement-focused.

Differences in the approach to IVS placements shape the way HCOs as boundary managers conceptualise their relationships with the volunteers. They influence HCOs' methodology for project-orientated information gathering and whether it includes the participation of stakeholders, evaluation of resources, logistics and context of the placement, as well as information sharing through formal partnerships agreements and volunteer job descriptions. The symmetry of information is a critical element in promoting trust-building and cooperation (Koeszegi, 2004) and more equitable power to influence in negotiating relationships (Brinkerhoff, 2002). What and how information is being shared between the HCO and the volunteer's shapes their expectations of each other (and the partner organisation) during the recruitment process and is crucial in providing the basis of the relationships after the arrival of the volunteer and during the placement.

#### ***5.3.1 Negotiating the focus for IVS***

While all IVCOs in this study describe themselves as development organisations, the approach of some HCOs to IVS placements is focused on the delivering the long term aims of strategic development programmes (development-focused), while others approach development intervention as a means of finding opportunities for IVS placements (placement-focused). The history of the IVCOs studied in this research (Chapter 6, section 6.2) and the description of the work of their HCOs show significant differences in the approach that HCOs take to developing IVS placements. IVCOs 2 and 4 were set up with the primary aim of providing technical assistance in international development as their organisational imperative from the start (Chapter 6, section 6.2.1), but their

function was established, or later incorporated, within international development agencies to whom they are accountable (Appendix 1 A-E). Thus IVS is one of a variety of mechanisms available to their HCOs for delivering development goals, as illustrated by the quote below from a senior HCO staff member of IVCO2:

*“The in-country office decides which structure & instruments to use to deliver the objectives... The costs arising for the volunteers’ activities are paid out from the project portfolio. Therefore volunteers can only be engaged if their role fits within a commissioned project.”* (HCO 2)

IVCO2’s promotional literature for Malawi illustrates a comprehensive range of programmes, the resources on which the IVCO can draw upon, and its history of working with the Government of Malawi and its institutions. They describe IVCO2’s activities in development terms that reflect its approach to sustainability and effectiveness in bringing about political, economic and social change in Malawi. This suggests not only institutional trust, but process-based trust between the HCO and the public and private institutions in Malawi and the IVCO’s potential power to influence development strategies in the country, and is illustrated in the statement below from an IVCO2 volunteer:

*“The strategy [is] run by the Malawian Government... and our programme works very closely with the Ministry of Finance [where]...we have three national staff sitting actually in the Ministry...and then we have a space at the district [where] me and another colleague are working...to support the implementation of the strategy at district level... [This is] nice because it gives us the possibility too[sic]. If you have an idea, you can try [it and see]”* (VOL3)

The origins of IVCOs 1, 3 and 5, however, were rooted in the value-based concepts of ‘giving’, ‘help’ and ‘charity’ which are associated with volunteering (Ch. 6, section 6.2.2). Irrespective of sources of funding, these IVCOs remain operationally independent and continue to depend exclusively on facilitating international volunteer placements in development projects. The implication is that for these IVCOs, and their HCOs, volunteer placements are a matter of organisational survival. Thus, as boundary managers, balancing the imperative to recruit international volunteers with delivering development goals becomes a challenge. A significant

indicator of the challenges that the staff of these HCOs face in balancing their conflicting priorities is linked to the approach they need to take to IVS placements. The examples below, first from a senior HCO staff member followed by one from a volunteer, illustrate:

*“We are very busy developing proposals so that we increase the number of [volunteers].”*  
(HCO 10)

*“The office operates like its survival depends on just bringing people in and putting them there.”* (VOL 12)

Here, the focus is not on development or volunteers, but on increasing the number of IVS placements, for which there is an implied sense of urgency. Developing proposals is the means for HCOs (as well as all other NGOs, INGOs and aid agencies) to pursue funding, particularly in response to the growing trend for restricted fund disbursement by donors (Chapter 2, section 6.2). This can tip the HCOs’ balance of priorities from a development focus to reliance on numbers of IVS placements and reflects the dilemma faced by all NGOs in balancing their development mandates with the imperatives for organisational survival. The different ways in which the five IVCOs and their HCOs mitigate this dilemma is discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

The example below shows that an HCO’s relationship with volunteers is not only influenced by intra-organisational relationships of the HCO with their IVCO head office, but also by inter-organisational relationships with donors and potentially other stakeholders, the implications of which are subject to detailed analysis in Chapter 7.

*“The very nature of accepting a grant and implementing it required changes in basic things like information, ways of working....There’s lots for us to work on [sic], to be more efficient and effective [and], as a grant management organisation, to be more reflective of our organisational values. How does [the organisation] balance working with volunteers.... with taking a more business approach to working? The definition there suggests that it’s hard-edged and uncaring.”* (HCO 4)

Impey and Overton (2014, p. 212) argue that IVCOs are mostly driven by ‘supply-side factors’ related to the availability, aspirations and capabilities of the volunteers and the concerns of funding

agencies, relying primarily on identifying needs as an opening for providing resources. They suggest that a demand-driven approach would recognise the partner's expertise, strengths and opportunities, how they work, what their values are and the expectations that shape their relationships with the volunteers (Impey and Overton, 2014, p. 212). Placement-focused IVS roles appear supply-driven in the sense that they are created to plug skill gaps in disparate projects, loosely based on head offices' thematic strategies such as poverty reduction, health and education. A placement-focused approach is more likely to lead to role conflict and uncertainty of priorities for HCOs in their function as boundary managers with mandates to act as agents of development while simultaneously facilitating volunteer services as a primary organisational objective. This ambiguity can have a negative impact on the potential for building process-based trust and cooperation between HCOs' staff and the volunteers. The example below is from a volunteer working with IVCO 3:

*"I know quite a number of volunteers who have come here, and they've ended up going back before their contract ends because of being disappointed... and they don't know what's wrong with the office...the office most of the time are not taking care of what the volunteers are complaining about...I think there is a problem with the organisational management at the HCO office."* (VOL9)

Development-focused IVS roles are closer to demand-driven scenarios because they are complementary to an inclusive set of mechanisms aimed at delivering the strategic goals of specific development programmes identified in collaboration with the host country partner. During visits to HCO offices of IVCO2, it was possible to observe direct collaboration between HCO staff and volunteers from different rural locations, in person as well as by telephone or e-mail, and is illustrated by the statement from a volunteer from IVCO2:

*"It was a good chance to really, really work together. [The HCO] was developing the database, so my national colleague [from the HCO] came a lot there to support implementation, and I could, like, support using it or solving questions, or problems [at the District level], because it was new to everyone."* (VOL 3)

A focus on development goals lessens the pressure on HCOs to justify the case for IVS as the principal instrument of intervention and minimises role ambiguity for HCO staff. It emphasises knowledge sharing between the HCO and the partner organisation, the agreement of long term goals involving targeted recruitment of volunteers with specific skills that build on the partner organisation's existing expertise, strengths and opportunities. In this way, it signals the HCO's tolerance for sharing power and willingness to adapt to the needs of the partner rather than solely relying on contractual procedures (Brinkerhoff, 2002). Thus, this approach supports collaborative behaviours that help build process-based trust.

The terms 'development-focused' and placement-focused' that I have introduced in this chapter, and refer to throughout the rest of the thesis, emerged as concepts during data analysis and through observing working practices. I noticed differences between organisations that talked about volunteers and others that talked about development where volunteers were one instrument in a multi-level, multi-actor approach to development. This was found to be related to the IVCOs' organisational histories, which is discussed in further detail in Chapter 6, Section 6.2. The term placement-focus is not intended to understate the development goals, and the sincerity, of IVCOs that fall into this category in wishing to achieve these goals, but to demonstrate that their approach does not support the delivery of the desired objectives consistently. This can be illustrated by the example below, of a programme described by the volunteer below, was being implemented through (placement-focused) IVCO3 and had development-based characteristics, but it was distinguishable from other programmes in the HCO by the dominance of one stakeholder's (the institutional donor) ability to influence the management of the intervention, including IVS:

*"The log-frame was done by both the [HCO] and the [institutional donor].... [The donor organised] the workshop...where the volunteers, the partners at the District level, ...and a few community members who were from the [pilot] project [attended]...[They] got ideas from us and took it for finalization.." (VOL 9)*

This respondent is describing a participatory approach that allows stakeholders power to influence decision-making and information sharing. This was demonstrated by observing two separate workshops organised jointly by the donor organisation and the HCO to prepare a proposal for an

extension request for the project. Over forty members of beneficiary communities attended the first workshop and facilitated by the volunteer and two counter-parts at District level to collect information for the second workshop held in Lilongwe. In addition to the lead programme manager from the donor organisation, the attendees of the second workshop included at least two senior officers from three different District Councils, the Assistant National Coordinator from a civil society umbrella organisation, and four key members of HCO staff as well as the volunteer. Interviews with the HCO staff members involved in this project (HCO 5), the volunteer (VOL 9) the volunteer's counterpart (CPRT 3), representatives of the partner organisation (PTNR 6) and the beneficiary group (BG 4, 11, 12, 13, 14) showed satisfaction with the progress of the project.

*“Based on the lessons we get, and the financial benefits they offer, we think in the near future, we shall have something to be proud of.” (BG 4)*

*“The impact is so great. It is commonly said that “chaphunzidwa si chiiwalidwa” (what has been learnt is never forgotten). As such, the lessons, the financial help will always help improve our families even to the future.” (BG 11)*

It was observed that any concerns with regards to the continuity of, and improvements to the project were being addressed through a participatory workshop organised by the donor and the HCO programme manager, where multiple stakeholders, including those mentioned above, were in attendance, and detailed action plan was produced for extending the timescale of the project. The above example demonstrates that consistency between theory and practice of IVS is achievable through a focus on strategic development in which volunteers are part of a demand-driven, multi-level and multi-actor approach to development interventions that has clear objectives, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. However, when IVS roles are placement-focused, the approach to development intervention becomes a disorderly and fragmented mix of projects that are reliant on the availability of, and access to, opportunities and resources that may not be in the power of the HCOs to influence, or have route maps to achieve their strategic aims. A placement – focus to IVS steers the HCOs towards what I would call ‘the farming of projects’ in an opportunistic way in order to meet their head offices’ thematic strategies for placing volunteers. Farming projects in this way means that the relationships between the HCOs and their stakeholders



are more likely to be situation-dependent, with a higher possibility of goal ambiguity and conflicting priorities, which may ultimately undervalue the contribution of IVS to the wider project.

### *5.3.2 Negotiating relationships in investigative groundwork for IVS placements*

HCOs navigate the course of international volunteer engagements in the host country through formal and informal relations with multiple stakeholders with diverse interests. This section looks at the activities involved in identifying and formulating IVS placements while the relationships between the HCOs and the partner organisations are the subject of detailed analysis in Chapter 7.

The impression created on IVCO websites and promotional material is that HCO staff have the necessary levels of local knowledge, professional expertise, resources, and networks to identify and select development programmes which are aligned to the visions and strategies of the IVCO and the host country. For example: “Our local offices are there to support you throughout your placement.” (VSO International, 2017), and “Peace Corps staff will make sure you build the technical skills needed—from agriculture to education to community development—to undertake project sector activities, report progress, and be productive in your community” (Peace Corps, 2016c). The statements below from two participants represent typical practice across the HCOs studied in this research in a manner that suggests equal and satisfactory participation of the HCO and the partner organisation in the formulation of the terms and conditions of the placements:

*“When we put in an international volunteer it is for specific technical skills.... [The design and negotiation of volunteer placements are done] at the same time [as] when we are developing the project].” (HCO 9)*

*“We draw the Terms of Reference together [with the HCO], and we are represented in the [interview] panel.” (MW 1)*

The above statements imply either the foundations or pre-existence of process-based trust and equality in power to influence the negotiation of relationships between the HCO and the Malawian partner organisation, resulting in agreed terms and conditions of an IVS placement that is presented

to the volunteer. However, examining evidence from volunteer interviews indicates a diversity of volunteers' experiences between the stated terms and conditions and the realities on the ground. The examples from the volunteers below, first from a development-focused (IVCO 2) followed by a placement-focused (IVCO5) illustrate:

*"[My expectation of the role] was very well [matched]...Everything was all there.....And in the District....they actually had an office place and a desk [for me].... I was very positively surprised because I expected it to be a lot more difficult. ....Also, I feel very much attached to the team here." (VOL 3)*

*"There **was** no job, no counterpart, and no resources. While I wasn't expecting a fully formed plan and detailed list of activities, I was expecting to have some broad goals/objectives; a loose but clear structure with access to support, resources, a how-to guidance to working within the local context... [But] there was no background information, no clear goals or strategies; no information or process for accessing resources." (VOL 18)*

The above examples show how the adequacy of investigative groundwork before volunteers' arrival can make a difference to a positive experience for the volunteers. Most international volunteers are largely reliant on the HCOs to provide them with accurate and realistic information which they can use to make decisions about undertaking the placement. This implies not only asymmetry of knowledge between the HCOs and the volunteers but the expectation that there has been adequate groundwork, which steers the volunteers to place institutional trust in the IVCO through information on their websites, as well as the characteristic-based trust on HCOs, based on their link with IVCO organisation. However, the above examples contradict the portrayal of HCOs on some IVCO websites by showing that they do not always have the necessary levels of local knowledge, professional expertise, resources, and networks to support their volunteers.

*"[The senior staff member at the HCO] was just never going to acknowledge it. When we talked about the [problem with my] visa, he just said: "There's nothing we can do, we've applied for it". And when I tried to talk about the motorbike, he said: "Oh, you just don't worry about the [IVCO] policy....we'll just change that." When I tried to talk about the fact that the [the places where I was supposed to work] weren't built, he said: "Oh well, we've had problems with this, that, and the other"... I just felt that things would never have worked." (VOL11)*

Among issues reported by volunteers, were obstructions associated with logistics of the placement, for example when a volunteer on a one-year placement arrived in July and found in October that she could not start her placement until the following March (VOL 5). Another source of frustration was inadequacy of resources to do the job, for instance, a volunteer was placed in a remote, rural location an hour's bicycle ride from the main road, with no electricity and no internet access, yet expected to be available at short notice and respond to HCO's requests or alerts (VOL 18). Others complained of miscalculation of the context, for example:

*"The [participants] from the Health Centres [who] come to the District Hospital for the teaching session, get 20,000 Kw allowance; if they come three or four times a month, it's 80,000... almost a monthly salary... But the [participants from the District Hospital] don't get this same allowance, and they are in the same room... my colleagues told me yesterday that 'It will not work.'"* (VOL 1)

On the other hand, positive volunteer experiences and relationships with HCO staff are seen to have a direct connection with the experience on the ground that match the volunteers' expectations and imply the potential for building process-based trust:

*"What I'm doing...really makes sense; I've seen a lot of placements where I think, 'Why is this created?' But I really like my job, and I think I can be very lucky that such a placement exists. When I started talking to the district, [I found out that], there had been an appraisal mission...for three days – and [my programme manager] had been part of it last year."* (VOL 2)

Despite small instances of overlap, there was a discernible difference between staff/volunteer relationships of development focused and placement-focused IVCOs. Out of four HCO staff members and eight volunteers interviewed from IVCOs 2 and 4, only one case (VOL 1) was experiencing unforeseen contextual issues which presented a challenge to the volunteer, but this had no impact on the relationship between the volunteer and the staff. The concerns of the volunteer were evaluated after discussions with partners, and the decision was made to end the placement at the end of the volunteer's posting (HCO 1, PTNR 1). In contrast, out of five HCO staff members and nine volunteers interviewed from IVCOs 3 and 5 (placement-focused), all

expressed conflicts and frustration in the relationships between staff and the volunteers, although one HCO staff member acknowledged that problems existed but did not provide a personal experience of them. An exception was the volunteer attached to IVCO1 (also placement-focused) who was content with the placement and had a good relationship with the HCO programme manager. However, this volunteer was the only person engaged in IVS in Malawi through IVCO1, so it is not possible to generalise this volunteer's experience.

The challenges for the HCOs, as boundary managers, are linked to prioritising the collection and use of different kinds of information required by their diverse stakeholders. For example, they need to present details of the social and environmental conditions, and available resources of the IVS placement in a manner that appeals to potential volunteers abroad but paints a realistic picture of the situations on the ground. On the other hand, in competing for project funding (Chapter 2, sections 2.3 and 2.4), they have to satisfy potential donors that they have the necessary capacity and resources to facilitate the development work, without exposing any organisational weaknesses – for example, challenges in volunteer recruitment. Thus the conflicting priorities drive them to exercise flexibility in allowing certain accountabilities to dominate over others (Lewis, 2014), meaning that HCOs can position themselves as the gatekeepers of information between the stakeholders (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013). Therefore HCOs can selectively share information to satisfy their donors in order to safeguard their main activities (Ebrahim, 2002, 2005), and understate the information shared with volunteers in a way that raises the volunteers' expectations of the role, but does not match reality and might lead to their disappointment and frustration on arrival or during the placement.

However, this asymmetry of information can backfire if the HCO does not have the necessary power over resources, capacity or clarity of mandate to identify and analyse the factors that contribute to the success of placement and balance their priorities accordingly. If the expectations of volunteers are not met on arrival at their placement, it leads not only to the erosion of trust and potential conflict between HCO staff and the volunteers, but it has consequences for the IVS and

the wider development project. One example relates to a large scale, a 3-year project which IVCO 3 was contracted to implement, but without having the necessary technical knowledge of resources. The project was more than one year behind schedule at the time of the fieldwork due to poor project planning and coordination by the HCO and also was struggling to deal with serious quality control issues related to building constructions. This meant that some volunteers arrived for their placements, only to find that they had nothing to do for many months, some of whom became impatient and left. Consequently, several elements of the project had to be cancelled due to volunteers' early departures as a result of their frustration with the situation.

### ***5.3.3 Negotiating job descriptions***

As boundary managers, HCOs can be envisioned as straddling the different 'worlds' between Malawi and the volunteer in his/her home country. The job descriptions and partnership documents (MOUs) that set out the terms and conditions of the IVS placement represent boundary objects (Chapter 3, section 3.2.4). Study of job descriptions, MOU documents and IVCO website pages show significant variation in the content and levels of details about terms and conditions of IVS placements that are shared with different stakeholders. The importance of understanding the role and responsibilities of the HCOs in their capacity as an organisational unit within IVCO structures is discussed in Chapter 6. However, the example below illustrates a typical explanation of their involvement in these activities:

*"When we agree on a volunteer placement [with the partner organisation], we draw up a job description, and we take it from there with [IVCO head office]." (HCO 9)*

Although variations are to be expected, they are revealing in the context of the different relationships that HCOs have to negotiate and the approach that each HCO takes in negotiating these relationships. For example, Appendices 12 and 13 show standard, but anonymised, Cooperation Agreement documents between IVCO2 and a partner organisation, and a job description document respectively. These documents show that the information contained is consistent in providing a similar depth of information for both parties that include background information of the project, as well as an overview of objective, tasks and responsibilities of the key

actors and reporting structures during the IVS placement. Participant responses show positive volunteer experiences concerning their role as set out in their job descriptions as exemplified in the following statement:

*“[The job description] was very well [matched] ...Everything was all there .....And in the District....they actually had an office place and a desk [for me] .... I was very positively surprised because I expected it to be a lot more difficult. ....Also, I feel very much attached to the team here.” (VOL 3)*

Equally, clarity was found in the responses given by participants from partner organisations:

*“[The volunteer] assists the way we organise ourselves in [the programme]. So they have expertise from wherever they’ve been working, and their learning is integrated with ours. But they make sure that we are at the forefront of running the show, so they just come with the backroom support”. (MW 5)*

The examples above suggest a collaborative approach to IVS negotiations that is facilitated by the extent and accuracy of knowledge sharing in a manner that strengthens the existing institutional trust and the building of process-based trust between the HCO, the partner organisation and the volunteers. The example below from a partner organisation illustrates:

*“When [the HCO] came to the district we gave them some statistics...then they present to...the District Executive Committee... a meeting which is conducted monthly. We ask them questions; they justify their project, then they are allocated....[a] Traditional Authority [that] .... in terms of [their] output, we think it will fit with this location.” (MW 5)*

The participants above prioritise their focus on development objectives and show that the HCO and the partner organisation negotiate their relationship through dialogue and knowledge sharing processes that recognise and respect the expertise of different actors. This empowers the key actors to exercise their influence within the relationship, which, in turn, facilitates the building of process-based trust. Consequently, the added value of the placement is recognised in a meaningful way since volunteers are an element in the mix of resources aimed at the delivery of the overall goals of the programme:

*“We worked [for] two months, 13 hours per day and on the weekends [sic]. But it was nice because it was a team. It was not me working, but it was at least three other people who were also there a lot, including my boss [at the HCO and] my counterpart here. So it created a nice [feeling]; made you get to know each other. Also, because you try to reach something together and you [succeed]; it was good.” (VOL 3)*

In contrast, Appendices 14 and 15 show the equivalent standard documents used by IVCO3 which contain different types and extent of information shared and agreed between the HCO and the partner organisation, and the HCO and the volunteer. The content and emphasis of the IVCO3 Partnership Agreement are very different from those in the IVCO2 Cooperation Agreement in the previous example. Crucially, the objectives of the programme appear as a brief appendix at the end of the Partnership Agreement, and there is a reference to an appended project proposal document. The impression created by the document is that the HCO is informing, rather than agreeing with, the partner of the imminent start of a project and the arrival of a volunteer to which they are required to agree. The language of the document shows an imbalance of power in the relationship between the HCO and the partner organisation as the terms and conditions of the agreement appear one-sided and do not demonstrate prior dialogue or participation by the partner organisation. The consequences surface when the volunteer arrives:

*“We were alerted before we came...that our partners would come to pick us [up and take us to the location, but] my partner was not there to pick me [sic]. So, after one week in Lilongwe, I was put on public transport, with my suitcase.... And told that some volunteer whom I had never met...would meet me in Blantyre ....which is a long distance from here.” (VOL 9)*

*“According to the contract, the expectation [of the partner organisation] was that... [the HCO] would give them the funds...to manage...But it's us who are managing the funds. So I felt a bit of hostility....they just really didn't seem to want to work with me.....and I didn't really know what to do with them.” (VOL 12)*

Although the issues range from minor or personal, to serious or professional concerns, they individually or cumulatively impact on the relationships between HCO staff, the volunteers, and the partner organisation.

In this case, it is difficult for either the partner or the volunteer to develop a full picture of what is and is not, included in the terms and conditions of an IVS placement since they are not always incorporated in a single document, and it is not clear whether the documents are shared, or who they are shared with. For example, Appendix 15 shows that the first paragraph in the Placement Outline of the Job Description document sets out the following disclaimer: “*[IVCO3] relies on information received from external sources and circumstances can change. Placement Outlines should be seen merely as a guide. [IVCO3] does not accept any liability in the event that any information is inaccurate.*” Moreover, volunteers are also often directed to IVCO websites or limited access pages on the IVCOs intranet for certain types of general policy-related information which may not be up to date. Page 2 of the Outline Cover also states “*these documents are somewhat out of date and thus do not reflect the type of work envisaged here*”, after advising the volunteers to consult certain documents. Language can be used in job descriptions to give the volunteers the impression of power to influence development projects through IVS, often utilising institutional and characteristic-based trust founded on the IVCO’s reputation:

*“I could argue that [the job description] is quite accurate in that it was quite vaguely written... It did feel a copy-and-paste sort of thing...it has turned out that I have to do...work, which I really didn’t want to do; that’s why I left my old job to try and avoid.”(VOL 16)*

Missing or incorrect information and misleading or ambiguity in the language of formal contracts open the potential for misinterpretation and adverse consequences. They can create an impression of a role that may not be true or accurate but can influence the volunteer, who has placed institutional and characteristic-based trust in the HCO, to accept and commit to a placement. Although to a certain extent, this can apply to any job-description, the consequences for volunteers who have made value-based commitments for little or no financial benefit, the experience can be distressing:



*“If you’re going to volunteer to come here, you need to have made an informed decision...because there’s nothing worse than you feeling in some way that you’ve been cheated, or you didn’t know what you were getting yourself in for.” (HCO 4)*

*“When I was initially preparing for my volunteering.... everything I knew and learnt about [the IVCO] it was so ok [sic]. When I came here, I was shocked because they didn’t seem to operate within [IVCO] kind of, what is it? Is it values or what?” (VOL 12)*

This section has examined how the organisational focus of IVCOs, the investigative groundwork for IVS placements, and the way that job descriptions can be formulated in advance of the volunteers’ acceptance of a role, set the expectations on which the relationships are negotiated between HCOs and the volunteers. The next section looks at how relationships between HCOs and the volunteers are negotiated during the IVS placement.

## **5.4 Negotiating the relationship with volunteers during their placement**

This section argues that the negotiation of relationships between HCOs’ staff and the volunteers during their placement is influenced by the ability of the HCO to provide volunteers with professional support, oversee their health and welfare, and resolve conflicts that may arise within the relationship. The status of the volunteers in the host country presents conflicting priorities for HCOs as boundary managers. On the one hand, the volunteers are professed technical experts with the power to access resources and networks that are not usually available to the partner organisations, and sometimes not even to the staff of the HCOs. On the other hand, they are dependent on the HCO for professional support and personal welfare. The language of development used in the descriptions of HCOs on IVCO websites and promotional material associates their activities with sustainable development, empowerment of local people and organisations, change-making, supporting the poor and marginalised, and value creation. These descriptions are augmented by portrayals of the role of the HCOs as fully integrated and aligned units within the IVCOs and in possession of skills and resources to actively support the volunteers in the use of their existing knowledge and skills while overseeing matters related to their health,

security and social welfare during the placement. Thus, as boundary managers, HCOs have to fulfil many different roles, not only as development agents, but also the implied roles of facilitator, instructor, mentor, and even in loco parentis, all of which require complex and sometimes conflicting sets of professional and interpersonal skills. However, the way head offices describe HCOs does not always correspond to how the HCOs perceive and experience their role and shows the challenges they face in reconciling their different mandates:

*“One of [the challenges of managing volunteers] is managing expectations....in terms of what they’re expected to know...to get used to their lifestyle in the context of where they are, especially those who are based in the rural communities...because that’s not what they expected. We try to ...provide some information... but still, you can imagine someone who has never been to Africa... thinking about nice homes.” (HCO 5)*

The section draws attention to interdependence in the relationships between the HCOs and the volunteers and the significance of HCOs’ ability to manage the implications of power and trust within their interdependent relationship with the volunteers. HCO-volunteer relationships create challenges between the HCOs and the volunteers because each has power over tangible (for example, funds, equipment, transportation) or intangible (such as technical knowledge or cultural insight) resources, and power to influence ( for instance through access to local networks or international donors) that the other desires or needs. The next two sub-sections analyse how the relationships between HCOs and the volunteers are influenced first by the professional and then by the personal support that the volunteers expect and what the HCOs can provide.

#### ***5.4.1 Negotiating professional support***

The literature on volunteer management and coordination reveals that although volunteers do not want to be managed in the same way as employed staff, they expect their work to be organised (Paull, 2000, p. 22). Grossman and Furano (1999, p. 217) observe that “No matter how well-intentioned volunteers are, unless there is an infrastructure in place to support and direct their efforts, they will remain at best ineffective or, worse, become disenchanted and withdraw, potentially damaging recipients of services in the process”. Consequently, when the management and coordination of volunteers conflict with other organisational objectives that HCOs have to

deliver, the ability of the HCOs to influence policy change at IVCO organisational level becomes critical:

*“If [only] we had changed [as we have been asking head office] and [could] just give [the volunteers] something substantial and say: “Here is your money, go buy...cooking utensils, mosquito net, and curtains.” ... [But the HCO] has to procure all those things, and **give** it to them [as well as] ....provide training and orientation... [when] staff have to focus on the donors.” (HCO 8)*

The above example points to two separate issues within this HCO: firstly, it demonstrates the frustration of staff as their concerns were not being heard by head office; and secondly, a lack of role clarity among the staff, both of which are examined in further detail in Chapter 6. However, there is also an underlying suggestion that there are some things that volunteers should be able to do for themselves. Meijs and Ten Hoorn (2008, p. 48) observe that the level of acceptance of administrators of volunteers by the volunteers influences the performance of administrators and may lead to administrator behaviours such as “walking on eggshells” or hostile attitudes.

*“Some [volunteers] are not self-starters; they will need to be nurtured and shown how to do things. [But] with the project, you are not here to be learning things... there’s no time for learning. So if you bring in a volunteer and it requires one year to learn [sic], then you’re in trouble.” (HCO 5)*

*“There are issues of volunteer management, looking after them and their expectations ... The level of what we are expected to deal with can get too much. (HCO 9)*

The statements above suggest that in this HCO, staff either do not have the power over required resources or capacity to address the concerns of the volunteers, or they lack role clarity or face conflicting priorities which they are unable to influence through organisational channels. One volunteer observed:

*“[HCO] staff that are directly supporting us are Malawians...[but] they’re not medical, they’re just kind of programming staff. I think that’s the problem: they’re running things that they know what should be done: “I can’t give you any recommendations; I know nothing about the medical field.”” (VOL 5)*

In contrast, the senior HCO staff of IVCOs 2 and 4 (development-focused) are experienced professionals in their field, for example, the programme manager for health systems strengthening at IVCO2 was a highly qualified medic with more than twenty years' experience in developing countries in Asia and Africa (HCO1). Furthermore, the contractual arrangements for heads of programmes in IVCO2 are for a minimum of four years (HCO1, 2) which, crucially, allows time for developing contextual insights as well as creating and maintaining a network of contacts that promote process-based trust and collaborative relationships. Also, since IVS is one of a variety of mechanisms available to their HCOs for delivering development goals, it means that volunteers have access to specialist personnel and resources in the same programme.

*“[The HCO staff] really did good research before placing [a volunteer]. And since their structure is having three [Malawian] National Advisors on the national level [in the programme], they know what’s going on in Malawi.” (VOL2)*

The data paint a picture of significant numbers of volunteers from the placement-focused IVCO3 (5 out of 6 participating volunteers) and IVCO5 (3 out of 3 participating volunteers) arriving at their placements with expectations of administrative structures, resources, and support networks at their place of work only to find their expectations dashed by the absence or inadequacies of the prevailing systems. However, scrutiny of the Partnership Agreement document from IVCO3 (Appendix 14) suggests that there is no expectation by the HCO of providing professional support to the volunteer after arrival at his/her placement location. Sections 3.1.2g-i of the document states that:

*“In all matters relating to the work of the project, the volunteer will report directly to [the partner organisation]. Only in the event of a breakdown in communications between the volunteer and the above should [IVCO3] Programme Office staff have any cause to intervene.”*

It is therefore not surprising that five out of six volunteers interviewed from IVCO3, complained of poor communication and lack of support from the HCO, as illustrated by one example below:

*“We’ve been having some challenges of communication [with the HCO], because ... you expect the office to be doing a follow-up or may be making a call, but....the office is quiet. Sometimes you feel...the office doesn’t exist... Quite a number of volunteers have... ended up going back before their contract ends because of being disappointed.” (VOL 9)*

Other examples from IVCOs 3 and 5 included failures of the HCOs to conduct in-country training for volunteers (VOL9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17), to hold project assessment and volunteer performance reviews (VOL9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18), to deliver an approved and promised grant (VOL 10), to facilitate access to networks and other sources of project-related information (VOLs 5, 11, 15, 16, 17,18), and to respond to volunteer concerns (all participant volunteers from IVCOs 3 and 5), which resulted in some volunteers’ early departure. Not only does the departure of volunteers signify a breakdown of trust, but it questions the type of volunteer support that is referred to when IVCO websites describe the work of their HCOs.

Undertaking an IVS placement represents acceptance of risk (Blomqvist, 1997; Rousseau et al., 1998; Wu and Laws, 2003) by the volunteers based upon positive expectations of institutional trust in the rubrics of IVS, and characteristic-based trust in the IVCO for the accuracy and integrity of information. As geographically distant outsiders, volunteers have no option but to rely on a combination of institutional trust and a form of characteristic-based trust ‘by proxy’ that reflects the HCO’s association with the IVCO, until they arrive in the host country and opportunities arise to build process-based trust. This characteristic-based trust ‘by proxy’ implies assumptions by volunteers that, as subsidiaries of IVCOs, HCOs are ‘trusted’ to have the required contextual knowledge, administrative tools and processes, management skills and organisational capacity to deliver the terms and conditions of the job description and IVS placements. When the expectations of the volunteers match the realities on the ground, it becomes a source of motivation and encouragement that helps build process-trust between the staff and the volunteers, and empowers the volunteers to participate and contribute to the wider programme, as the example below from a volunteer from IVCO2 illustrates:

*“I would never have imagined that [HCO would] allow all this influence from a [volunteer], because me and the other [volunteer] gave [our programme manager] feedback, and she was very open and said: “Okay, if that’s the situation at the district; well, then we need to change our whole agenda for the planning workshop” .... so she’s really open to get us moving.” (VOL 2)*

Communication is a primary contributor to trust-building, yet the logistics of IVS means that trust between HCOs and volunteers can, initially, only be characteristic and institutionally based since process-based trust can only develop through sharing knowledge and experiences. If the environmental settings do not support and facilitate effective communication, process-based trust is unlikely to develop, and the expectations that formed the foundation of characteristic-based and institutional trust may deteriorate.

#### ***5.4.2 Negotiating personal support***

Issues such as personal safety, accommodation, food and nutrition, health and hygiene, transportation, utility services, access to professional networks, ability to respond to urgent matters arising back home are all included in the remit of HCO responsibility as well as their other functions. They are part of the ‘softer’, but no less important factors such as language competency, knowledge of local protocol, and even companionship during the placement which HCOs have to provide to ensure the security and welfare of foreign volunteers.

*“The work of the Programme Managers has changed but....the management of volunteers remained the same....the pastoral support [for volunteers] ... and some of the care facilities like...baby-sitting, [is] no longer there... So we [have] had volunteers complaining but staff also complaining: “What do the volunteers want? Because we have to attend to the donors, but the [volunteers] also want to be cared for.” (HCO 8)*

The above statement illustrates the vulnerability felt by the volunteers, their dependence on the HCO for personal welfare and their inability to influence conditions in their environment. At the same time, it highlights the frustration of HCO staff when they are unable to provide the services that they would like to, and meet the expectations of the volunteers. The challenges associated with managing volunteers create tensions between the volunteers and the HCO staff and influence the

behaviour of the different actors depending on the degree of perceived or real risks and uncertainties:

*“[The volunteers] did a basket survey but.... [The office staff] weren’t going to share the findings... [Eventually] they agreed to share, but only with the volunteers who....were part of the survey.... There’s this idea of information silos; the more you hold that no-one else knows the more power you seem to have.” (VOL 16)*

The comment below from a staff member of the HCO shows how they experienced the above scenario:

*“In Malawi, food is really expensive, and the amount [of volunteers’ allowance] doesn’t go very far, especially in the far and rural areas. But when we raise this [with head office], we are told no, that is what it is, and you have to follow the policy.” (HCO 9)*

No such issues were reported in interviews with participants from development-focused IVCOs 2 and 4. Volunteer allowances and benefits (such as transportation, housing allowance and regular communications) made the volunteers independent and empowered to manage their basic needs while being assured of support when needed. I was able to observe the speed and efficiency of the staff of HCO from IVCO2 in responding to a potential safety incident involving a volunteer’s partner in the first few months of their arrival. The situation was resolved quickly and effectively, reassuring the volunteer and the partner who both subsequently stayed for the full duration of the placement.

HCOs face challenges that are related to ‘managing’ power relations and generating trust in their relationship with the volunteers. In the context of home-country volunteering, Hager & Brundy (2004, pp. 9–11) note that “managers of volunteers are often less paid than and receive less professional training of their field, [and] while practices in volunteer management have been promoted, there has been little research into the adoption of these practices in the non-profit sector.” While recognising that the field of volunteer management is relatively new and sparse, less considered are the dilemmas that are relevant to IVS as a distinct form of volunteering with unique characteristics. This sub-section shows that managing international volunteers requires specific resources and skills that are different from home-country volunteering. Chapter 6 examines

the diversity of approach to staff training and development among IVCOs and the challenges associated with justifying the inclusion of funding for ‘soft administration requirements’ such as training, conference attendance, and incidental expenses within donor project proposals and that affect the day to day work of both, the HCO staff and the volunteers:

*“The staff here look quite tired; quite not [committed]; quite confused about volunteers. They have the attitude they can leave if they want to.” (VOL 17)*

## **5.5 Volunteer retention, evaluation and placement closure**

This section looks at how conflict is negotiated in the relationship between the HCOs and its relevance to volunteer retention as a positive indicator of effective volunteer management. Looking at HCOs as boundary managers, this section examines how success or failure of the HCOs to manage the power relations in their relationships with the volunteers during IVS placements impacts on the types of trust and how knowledge is shared between them and the volunteers.

The literature on volunteer management reveals that volunteer retention is a goal for IVCOs, as well as an indication of the success of their IVS programmes (Hager and Brudney, 2004, p. 19). Managing the volunteers’ expectations, influencing them to remain in spite of the disappointments and challenges, or to replace them with minimum harm to the project, is problematic for HCOs. Since the previous sections have shown that the majority of volunteers who expressed dissatisfaction with HCOs in this research worked with placement-focused IVCOs, it could be assumed that the challenges of volunteer retention are more pronounced in IVCOs 1, 3 and 5. The following statements are from two senior HCO staff of IVCO3:

*“What we are expected to deal with can get too much. But then [the volunteers] complain to the office or to Head office or they just leave and say “I’ve had enough, I’m going.” (HCO 9)*

*“[Looking after volunteers] it’s like having ten babies from different mothers but [who] stay with you in the same house. That’s difficult.” (HCO 6)*



On the other hand, the quote below is a representative example of the perspective of nearly all of the volunteers from the same IVCO:

*“I’ve heard from the staff [about] internal reviews [that] we’ve got to have it blah blah blah. How do you even know...[who] should [be doing the review?]... I’ve been here for nine months; if I’d been reviewed [the HCO staff would know how I] feel about this.”*  
(VOL17)

The quote suggests the inability of the HCO staff to recognise or acknowledge the issues of concern to volunteers and point to weaknesses in the evaluation processes during the IVS placement:

*“The [volunteers] are supposed to [have reviews during their placement] but...I don’t know if the programme managers are doing it. [An exit review is] a MUST, but...nobody follows up. Even the country director doesn’t see it.... There was a gap in [volunteer] satisfaction levels and [head office] suggested that we should...have a [staff response monitoring system], but it is not [working]”* (HCO6)

The participant is describing a breakdown of trust and ineffective exchange of information to support the relationship between the HCO staff and volunteers that may have implications for IVS but remain unresolved.

Volunteers who become frustrated with their placements can complain to the HCO or the head office (VOL 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18) leave early (VOL 11, 12, 17) or find alternative means of occupying themselves (VOL 10, 15, 18) in ways that significantly affect the aims and processes of IVS and the wider development project by creating a gap in the structure of the wider project. The examples below illustrate:

*“I did a lot of things that weren’t part of the project, but it kept me busy...but after five months of doing nothing....I just felt that things would never have worked. That was sad, and I do feel that I never completed what I set out to do, and that’s been hard for me.”*  
(VOL 11)

*“I managed to start up a training [sic] for juveniles...[Then]somebody who had many contacts in England....asked me to write a [five year] project proposal and [financed the]*

*first two years. So I've been using that money for implementing... [my own] project."*  
(VOL 10)

The quote from VOL 10 shows that volunteers can embark on individual projects, outside of the mandate of the HCO while continuing to remain and work in Malawi, supported by the HCO, and under the continued assumptions to be volunteering in accordance with the justification for which their work permits were granted by the Government of Malawi. This makes them potential loose cannons and creates problems related to legitimacy and accountability of the volunteer which was expressed by the co-workers of participant VOL 10 above, through deep concerns with regards to the continuation of the project after the imminent departure of volunteer (CPRT 1 and 6). However, the HCO was unable to intervene after the volunteer's departure as it had no involvement in the design and implementation of the project or its future potential. Of the nine volunteer participants interviewed from placement-focused IVCO3 and IVCO5, three left before completing their placements; four occupied themselves with activities outside the scope of their job descriptions. In contrast, of the eight volunteers who participated from development-focused IVCOs 2 and 4, there was just one case when, following a formal review of an IVS position, the volunteer was reassigned to a different project due to emerging political sensitivities in her original placement (VOL13).

A volunteer's early departure from a placement to return home also has a serious consequence for HCOs as well as the other IVS stakeholders. The implications are not only a gap in resources that might delay or stall the project but potential financial losses to the sponsor (who may or may not be the IVCO). Costs associated with IVS relate to flights, contracted arrangements with regards to volunteers' stipend, expenses and accommodation, as well as logistical considerations around organising travel, insurance, and cargo costs.

*"[In the] project there was enough money for six volunteers....two left within the first six months, another two left before the end of the first year, so in fact, only two finished [their placement] ....and the money came from [institutional donor]." (VOL 11)*

The number of returned volunteers is used by some IVCOs as a performance measure for HCOs (van Eekelen et al., 2012) and signifies the importance of careful management of the relationship

between the HCOs and the volunteers. Volunteers' ability to leave early or access opportunities outside of their placement description suggests that either HCOs do not have the power to influence the volunteers' decision, or that they choose not to, despite the potential increased risk of adverse consequences. This demonstrates the interdependence of HCOs and volunteers because, while the volunteers continue to rely on the resources provided by the HCO (allowance, accommodation, health insurance, flights and transportation), the disclosure of a 'failed' IVS placement would be potentially damaging to the reputation of the HCO and the IVCO. On the other hand, HCOs can claim the credit by associating themselves with positive outcomes from a volunteer's independent activity, even though they may have had no involvement in the project:

*"In my Exit-interview, I am going to be asked [if I would repeat this experience] and I will probably say yes. But that would be for very different reasons that the [HCO] will submit in its report. The [HCO] will report that as a tick in the box, earning them credit for how well they managed my placement, but wouldn't be true."* (VOL 18)

The ability of HCO to be selective in what, how and with whom they share information reinforces their role as gatekeepers of information in projects that use IVS. However, weaknesses in the ability of the (largely placement-focused) HCOs to adequately manage volunteer retention, and the challenges that they face, do not appear to impact on the institutional and process-based trust placed on the HCOs by the other IVS stakeholders:

*"Maybe it's a donor problem... Donors don't actually ask... what [is happening in] the projects; how many volunteers have left, etc. Those aren't the questions that people ask."* (VOL 11)

This concurs with the critique of some authors in the development management literature who consider that there is not enough emphasis by donor agencies on the significance of indirect outcomes and failures within internal management of INGOs, to inform decision-making procedures that could support more positive development outcomes (Mawdsley, et al., 2005; Choudry and Kapoor, 2013; Gulrajani, 2014). Moreover, when the underlying reasons and consequences of the volunteers' behaviours and actions in IVS, and the project in which it is

incorporated go unquestioned and are tolerated, it resembles a ‘moral hazard’ or risk (Guston, 1999, p. 93) in the relationships between the HCO and those stakeholders to whom the HCO is accountable (donors, IVCO head office, partner organisations and beneficiaries).

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter shows that the negotiation of the relationship between the HCO staff and the volunteers is affected by the diversity of perspectives of volunteering, role conflict and uncertainty of priorities among HCOs’ staff, and the contrasting expectations of the professional, personal and administrative support that HCOs can provide within IVS processes.

This chapter showed that the association of the concept and values of volunteering with ‘charity’ and ‘help’ sometimes work against the aims and processes of IVS, sometimes leading to suspicion of the motives of the volunteer who undertakes IVS roles. Asymmetry of knowledge about contextual factors in Malawi on the one hand, and the volunteer motivations and backgrounds on the other, increase perceptions of risk and shapes the behaviours of HCOs staff, the volunteers and their co-workers in their relationships with each other. This makes building process-based trust difficult when the actors’ expectations are not based on knowledge obtained through prior experience of interactions, but on institutional and characteristic-based assumptions.

Irrespective of how they describe themselves and the role of their host country offices, IVCOs differ in their organisational focus and whether the focus is on development strategies that can use volunteers (demand-driven/development-focused), or placing volunteers in development roles (supply-driven/placement-focused). However, there is sometimes a discrepancy between how IVCO head offices state their organisational focus and the role of the HCO, and how HCOs actually work, particularly when the organisational survival of not only the HCO but ultimately the IVCO, depends on the ability to facilitate volunteer placements. This draws attention to an important point in the literature on NGO management (Chapter 2, section 2.4) and the dilemma

faced by NGOs in balancing their development mandates with the imperatives for organisational survival.

Geographical distance before placement prohibits HCO's staff and volunteers from day to day interactions that support the building of process-based trust. Thus both the integrity and extent of information exchange is critical in building expectations of institutional and characteristic-based trust. The uncertainty of role and conflicting priorities in placement-focused IVCOs and programmes affect how HCO staff approach the assessment of potential IVS placement opportunities in development projects. This chapter underlines the role of HCOs as boundary managers and their ability to act as gatekeepers of information, allowing them to prioritise what and how information is shared, and with whom, in the processes of identification, investigation and formulation of IVS placements. Asymmetry of knowledge can become problematic if the processes of information exchange through web-based descriptions, partnership agreements and job description documents are less than adequate to meet the expectations of the volunteers. It can potentially diminish institutional and characteristic-based trust between the HCO and the volunteers, and make it harder to build process-based trust during the placement from a weakened foundation.

Negotiating the necessary balance of power in the relationships with the volunteers, in ways that positively contribute to IVS, falls within the mandate of the HCOs as boundary managers. The effectiveness of managing the power relations with the volunteers depends on whether HCOs have clarity of role and organisational priorities, power over resources and power to influence factors within and outside of their organisation. Inability to meet the expectations of volunteers in providing the type and extent of support they feel they need, diminishes the potential for building process-based trust and reinforces assumptions based on stereotypes that strain the relationships between the HCO staff and the volunteers. It reduces the volunteers' institutional trust in the IVCO and their characteristic-based trust in the HCO. Disappointment or frustration with their placements can drive volunteers to take actions with possible unintended outcomes that may, or may not, be

perceived in a favourable light by the other IVS stakeholders. This has potential consequences for HCOs as questions may be raised concerning not only the accountability, transparency and sustainability of the volunteers' work, but also the attribution of any positive or negative outcomes of the independent work of the volunteers to the HCO. However, this does not appear to impact on the institutional and process-based trust placed on the HCOs by the other IVS stakeholders. Thus it resembles a moral hazard (Guston, 1999, p. 93) in the relationships between the HCO and those stakeholders to whom the HCO is accountable (donors, IVCO head office, partner organisations and beneficiaries).

Next, Chapter 6 will turn to examine the HCOs' relationships with their head office, followed by examining the HCOs' relationships with their partner organisations and beneficiary groups in the landscape of development in Malawi in Chapter 7.

## **Chapter 6**

### **HCOs' Relationships with Head Office**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter looks at the way IVCO formal and informal structures and procedures support or constrain relationships between HCOs and their head offices. It argues that discrepancies exist between how the role of HCOs is described by the IVCOs, and how it is experienced and enacted by the HCOs. These discrepancies are related to the original aim of IVCO organisations when they were established, as well as current and historical changes to power relations within IVCO organisations in response to external and internal influences. The ability of an IVCO to respond to emerging global trends is directed by the types of information that it considers important for it to continue functioning and how external information is interpreted into internal policies and procedures. The chapter makes a distinction between development-focused and placement-focused IVCOs with the former having evolved to be more adaptable to change and a more positive relationship between the HCO and their head offices, whereas the latter has struggled to respond to changes that have added complexity to historical power relations and diminished institutional trust.

Organisational structures and the language used to convey the policies, as well as opportunities and spaces available for knowledge sharing, participation in democratic processes, and the way management makes and enacts decisions affecting its own staff influence the day to day operations of the HCOs. However, as boundary managers, HCOs also have to negotiate relationships with other actors outside the IVCO. Consequently, the incorporation of HCOs into the IVCOs' overall strategy is not always as seamless as it is portrayed. Power over resources, power to influence and generation of process-based trust between the head offices and HCOs affects the levels of alignment between HCOs and IVCO head office. The extent to which IVCOs' demonstrate their espoused principles and values to their own staff is reflected, not only in fair remuneration packages and the quantity of the provision of resources to HCOs, but to transparency and

mechanisms for resource allocations within the wider organisation, and IVCOs' commitment to staff training and development.

**Section 6.2** looks at how an HCO negotiates relationships within the IVCO is shaped by the history of the parent organisation, the types of trust and power relations that existed when the IVCO was first set up, and how and why they changed over the years. Global trends in fund disbursement, donor imperative for professionalism and an evidence-based approach to development, as well as improvements in education, health and infrastructure in developing countries necessitated IVCOs to reassess their strategies to IVS. While some IVCOs have demonstrated ability and capacity to evolve in alignment with emerging trends in international development, to remain or become development focused IVCOs, others have found this a challenge or unnecessary.

**Section 6.3** sets out how institutional and process-based trust and power relations shape the way IVCOs' formal organisational policies and procedures are enacted at HCO level, and how they affect the way relationships are negotiated between HCOs and their head office. It argues that unlike the way they are portrayed on IVCO websites, HCOs are not continuous extensions of IVCO head offices. Organisational structures and the language used to convey the policies, as well as opportunities and spaces available for knowledge sharing, participation in democratic processes, and the way management makes and enacts decisions affecting its own staff influence the day to day operations of the HCOs. However, HCOs are also entrenched in professional and social networks that include other actors inside and outside the IVCO. Consequently, the incorporation of HCOs into the IVCOs' overall strategy is not always as seamless as it is portrayed. This section draws parallels between NGO management literature and Multinational Corporation (MNC) literature and the literature on boundary organisations.

**Section 6.4** uses the expression 'Walk the Talk' employed by Brunt and McCourt (2012), to look at the extent to which IVCOs' espoused principles and values are reflected in the relationship between head offices and HCOs. This section argues that the perceived value of the resources and support



promised or made available to HCOs' staff by their parent organisation is related not only to the quantity of the provisions but to transparency and mechanisms for resource allocations within the wider organisation. This section offers empirical evidence that power over resources and generation of process-based trust between the head offices and HCOs reflect the leadership style and human resource management strategies and practices which are critical in the achievement of developmental goals (Edwards and Fowler, 2002; Reiche, 2007). Levels of IVCO commitment to staff training and development and fair remuneration packages are contrasted with staff (and volunteer) turnovers, pointing to underlying causes of poor morale among HCO staff as they adopt informal coping mechanisms to address the resource and administrative constraints that they face.

**Section 6.5** concludes by reflecting on a summary of the discussions in this chapter.

## **6.2 A historical perspective on the relationships between HCOs and their head offices**

Although the IVCOs in this study were established at around the same time, and for similar reasons, they have evolved in different ways. Furthermore, irrespective of the high levels of government funding (Table 1, page 14) which the IVCOs in this study receive, no evidence was found during the fieldwork to suggest political interference at the level of HCOs' operations that might impact the relationship between the IVCO head office and the HCOs.

This section argues that the original aim of IVCO organisations when they were established, as well as external influences, not only affect organisational structures and strategies of IVCOs, but the way relationships are negotiated between HCOs and their head offices. It shows that the ability of the IVCO to respond to emerging global trends is directed by the types of external and internal information that it considers important for it to continue functioning, how the information is used and for what purpose. This section examines the implications of these historical influences on the role of the HCO in the institutional landscape of development in Malawi. By distinguishing between IVCOs that are development-focused and those that are placement-focused, this section looks at the historical significance of the organisational focus of the case study IVCOs in shaping their characteristics of the current relationships of HCOs with their parent organisation.

### 6.2.1 Development-focused IVCOs

The histories of IVCO4 and IVCO2 show that they were established as development-focused IVCOs from the start, with the primary aim of providing technical assistance in international development as their organisational imperative (HQ 1, 5, 2, 4), rather than the value-based concepts of ‘giving’, ‘help’ and ‘charity’ which are associated with volunteering. The IVCO2 website describes its origin as a Development Service Organisation which seconded professionally experienced and socially committed specialist [volunteers], in response to requests from the organisations in partner countries, to work on the ground and provide support through expert advice, financing relatively small programmes and supporting local experts. The resolution that led to the establishment of IVCO4 recognises that voluntary service can make a substantial contribution to development assistance by providing trained workforce providing such services are well-planned and directed, and the volunteers have the technical and personal qualifications required for the development of the recipient countries. The emphasis in both IVCOs was on providing the services of “*mature technical people who are not bureaucrats*” (HQ 5) with volunteers as one of the “*instruments of intervention*” and performance indicators that facilitate accountability and attribution of impact in technical assistance can be linked to tangible and measurable outcomes at the programme design stage (Appendices 12, 13 and HQ 2, 4, HCO 2). Thus the HCOs’ basis for IVS was, and continues to be, justified as complementary to an inclusive set of mechanisms aimed at delivering the strategic goals of specific development programmes identified in collaboration with the host country. A participant from IVCO2 explained, using the example of a programme in the Malawian health sector:

*“[In my programme proposal] I follow the indicator[s]...that are in line... with the partner[’s aims]...[and] against which I can place my [volunteer]. I will write Terms of Reference very specifically, that the outcome of this person....results in goal achievement of this indicator.... Because I have to report what percentage I have achieved...[in order to] continue [the] programme or...the placing [off] a volunteer.” (HCO 1)*

The formal structures and accountabilities that link IVCO4 and IVCO2 with their institutional donors steer them towards being outward- facing organisations (reacting to and adapting to events

and opportunities in the outside environment) (Anheier, 2005; Lewis, 2014, pp. 146–7). They also add a level of credibility and characteristic-based trust of the IVCOs by other IVS stakeholders that further strengthen the institutional trust within and outside the countries of their head offices.

Within the reporting structure of IVCO4 system, the Programme Officer for the country works within the broader mandates of a sister agency, to which it is accountable, to provide “*volunteers and volunteer solutions to accelerate, to deliver on [sister agency’s] programmes*” (HQ 5). The history of IVCO2 shows that since inception, it has operated under the umbrella of its government ministry for international aid and cooperation, through which its work is commissioned, and to whom it remains “*absolutely accountable*” (HQ3), in line with its government’s policy on international development:

*“[The ministry] issues the commissions with specified objectives and performance indicators, but the in-country office decides which structure & instruments to use to deliver the objectives for example, through local NGOs; or a team led by an international leader; or engaging a national expert; or volunteers.”* (HCO 2)

IVCO4 and IVCO2’s focus on development relies on organisational perspectives that are sensitised to changes in external dynamics at global and national levels, as well as responsive strategic review processes that allow these IVCOs to proactively mitigate the impacts of emerging trends in the arena of development. The statements below from a head office staff of IVCO2 illustrates:

*“In the ‘80s [our strategy] already changes [sic] because we saw that the needs of our partners are changing....Our partner countries developed themselves;... our partners cried for more professionalism and... technical expertise. And we jumped on that.”* (HQ 2)

A proactive approach to adapting to change requires systems and processes that not only allow the collection and analysis of external and internal information between head office and HCOs but organisational structures for the dissemination of information and feedback mechanisms that allow both parties to recognise and adapt to emerging trends in development. For example, through the IVCO4 Annual Country Scan exercise, each field provides a comprehensive report on the political and socio-economic context of the country as well as its related current and forecasted activities with other sister agencies and frameworks, which is then cross-referenced by the portfolio manager

at head office who offers recommendations for sharing of knowledge and experience with neighbouring countries (HQ1).

The amount of information sharing is recognised in the literature on MNCs as a fundamental element of negotiating effectiveness and developing a climate of trust in decentralised parent/subsidiary relations (Butler, 1999; Lai et al., 2014). However, trust is only meaningful when the expectations of both predictability and goodwill are met (Hardy et al., 1998, p. 8). Hardy et al. (1998, p. 8) note that “predictability arises from shared meaning; while goodwill arises from the participation of all partners in the communication process whereby this shared meaning is created.” Therefore, trust can be considered as an open, informative process that connects diverse groups (Hardy et al., 1998, p. 8). Consequently, although information sharing in the above IVCOs may have had its origins in institutional trust within the IVCO’s organisational structure, it has developed into process-based trust over time as both HCO and head office meet each other’s expectations. Diallo and Thuillier (2005, p. 241) note that process-based trust grows through direct or indirect, personal and professional communication of each actor’s values, knowledge, honesty, reliability, loyalty and sense of fairness. Thus process-based trust provides the necessary foundation for non-opportunistic behaviour (Hardy et al., 1998), strengthens the alignment between HCO and head office and minimises divisions between policy and practice.

One way to examine the consistency of shared meanings of decentralised organisations is to look for congruity between the stated strategy from head office and HCO practice on the ground. The example below from IVCO2 illustrates matching perspectives in policy and practice of IVS from head office, through the HCO and the field level:

*“For us, it’s a strategic thinking... to integrate [volunteers] with different actors working towards joint objectives and if you do that in a clever way, then you have added value.”*  
(HQ 4)

*“In Malawi.....we look at all these [priority] areas and prepare a team who are professionals and who are in favour of the Malawi partner.”* (HCO 1)

*“[The HCO] involved the community-level actors, the extension personnel from the ministries – even up to national level..... I was quite impressed by how extensively they involved people...trying to change the way that people construe food.” (VOL 7)*

The participants above demonstrate the effectiveness of knowledge sharing in achieving congruity of shared meanings and consistency of approach among employed staff at head office, HCO and volunteers at all levels IVCO2.

### **6.2.2 IVS Placement-focused IVCOs**

In post-war Britain and the United States, the origins of IVCO1, IVCO3 and IVCO5, were rooted in providing voluntary service, rather than technical assistance, through the deployment of volunteers to poor countries. Websites for IVCOs 1, 3 and 5, as well as available literature on IVCOs 3 and 5, show that emphasis at the time of inception was placed on engaging volunteers, largely the post-war youths, to help the less developed nations to meet their needs, as well as promoting mutual understanding of both the volunteers and the service recipients, of the world outside their countries (Bird, 1998; Grubbs, 2009; Amin, 2014). Bird (1998, pp. 16–7) notes that the perspective of voluntary service in IVCO3 was on giving, or being of personal service, “because of being needed, and because of something given up...It is the opportunity to help that is centre stage, not what is given”.

Bird’s (1998) suggestion on how the conflict between values at inception, and maintaining independence in spite of high levels of funding from the UK Government shaped the organisational characteristics of one of these IVCOs, can be equally applicable across the three IVCOs 1, 3 and 5. The centralised, top-down disbursement of funding by head offices - power over resources - meant that the original role of HCOs was to identify plug-in skill gaps in disparate projects, loosely based on head offices’ thematic strategies such as poverty reduction, health and education, as long as it involved engaging volunteers:

*“IVCO3 had DFID money, and they would present the budget to DFID that we want to place 1000 volunteers across the world. Then Malawi would be asked how many do you want [from] this one thousand. Malawi will say like, 50...based on the problem we’d*

*developed... [and] the volunteer placements that we'd developed....That is how it was."*  
(HCO 8)

The statement above suggests the presence of institutional trust in the historical relationships that underpinned support for IVS through unrestricted funding, not only between IVCO3 and DFID but also between HCO and head office. Crucially, the participant's description shows that funding was approved based on creating IVS placements as inputs into development programmes, but not necessarily on the contribution of IVS to the long term aims of those development interventions. The point was confirmed by another participant from IVCO3:

*"IVCO3 has always stopped at the outcome point...and never took that step further."*  
(HCO 4)

The histories of IVCO1 and IVCO3 illustrate an enduring period of institutional trust between them and DFID that allowed the continuation of financial support from the DFID, through the 1960s and 1970s, irrespective of outcomes. This implies a level of acceptance of the integrity and productivity of the work of the IVCOs that resembles a moral hazard (Chapter 3, section 3.2.4) representing the risk taken by DFID in its relationships with the IVCOs. An outcome of long-term Government support in the form of unrestricted funding, with little or no accountability, was that the recipient IVCOs never had to proactively market themselves to attract alternative sources of funding (Bird, 1998, p. 114). Consequently, cultivating long term relationships with other international donors, and an appropriate organisational approach to collecting and disseminating external and internal information, was not necessarily a priority for IVCOs 1, 3 and 5 and they remained largely inward-facing (focusing on the organisation's own objectives, values and worldview as the main source of strategy) (Anheier, 2005; Lewis, 2014, pp. 146–7). This led to weaknesses in structures, policies and processes that might facilitate a proactive approach to growth and change.

*"Change has occurred in IVCO3 partly because it had to occur: through external forces."*  
(HCO 4)

The change referred to is the global trend to move away from unrestricted funding by governments and their agencies. The move away from unrestricted funding severely impacted the long-established institutional trust in the relationships that IVCOs1 and 3 had enjoyed with DFID (HCO 10,4, 5, 8, 9), but less so on IVCO5 that has retained the full support of its government in providing unrestricted funding (HQ 6). One independent attendee at the IVCO Forum 2016 suggested that, for IVCO3, the change signified *“a move from DFID giving a large sum of money and telling them “Go and do good things with it” to “Justify and show what you’re achieving, or there won’t be any money.”* The point was confirmed by a participant:

*“The environment changed for IVCO3.... DFID [was asking] “Well, what’s your impact?”..... [But IVCO3] was unable to answer the question of impact...So it really struggled, as an organisation...to articulate what IVCO3 achieved; even at an outcome level.”* (HCO 4)

The participant is describing how DFID’s strategy of reducing financial support in a relatively short period (Chapter 2, page 32) reflected the impact of changes in global trends in development management, and a breakdown of institutional trust in the IVCO as a result of its failure to respond to the requirements for accountability and evidence of technical achievement. This threatened the survival of IVCOs1 and 3 and pushed them towards finding alternative sources of finance (10, 4, 8, 9). However, donor imperative for professionalization demanded collection and analysis of factual information from the field – where the HCOs work - as a pre-requisite for funding projects, rather than a generalised description of activities from IVCO head offices. The impact on the role of HCOs was enormous:

*“We shifted..... from being an employment agency to more of a development agency...now that the idea of IVCO3 being a development organisation [is] coming in, [staff] need to go on to resource mobilisation to support our programmes... and getting more donors coming in to fund us.”* (HCO 8)

The use of the phrase ‘the idea of IVCO3 being a development organisation’ indicates a notable gap between how the role of HCOs is regarded by head office, and how it is perceived and experienced by the HCO. It suggests that being a development agency was still ‘an idea’ rather

than practice. Also, the word ‘shift’ reflects ambiguity with regards to who has or should have the power to instigate the effects of change within the organisation and how it should be done. It implies sudden movement rather than gradual transformation by choice or consent through participation in the processes that bring about change. While incremental change relies on collaborative approaches to data collection, and the construction of knowledge to help plan and prepare for meeting impending transition, unexpected change suggests a lack of prior knowledge and information, insufficient awareness of, and preparation to meet new challenges, a concern shared by several HCO staff members of IVCO3, one of whom observed:

*“[The impact of such a change in a short time on the HCO is that] it creates a new set of standards and ...the requirement for skills and knowledge that an organisation may not have... Targeting new streams of income, classical institutional donors, that changes everything: how you work; how you articulate your work; and what is required. And whereas volunteering was the fundamental aspect of IVCO3, soon as you go into grant management, it becomes an element of what you do; becomes an input; technical input.”*  
(HCO 4)

Despite the changes in the balance of restricted and unrestricted funding, a significant number of IVCOs, including IVCO3, continue to receive substantial amounts of their funding from their own or other governments (Chapter 2, section 2.3). However, these funds may also be restricted to certain types of programmes only, for example, the International Citizen Service (ICS)<sup>28</sup> programme which is funded by DFID. The vacuum created by shortfalls in unrestricted-funding is also being filled by alternative sources of restricted financing through donor-supported projects and programmes negotiated locally in the host country through the HCOs (Chapter 2, section 2.3). The impact has increased HCOs’ power over resources and changed the characteristics of HCOs of IVCOs1 and 3 from being totally reliant on their parent organisations for funding, to a status equivalent to an independent NGO in the host country where they have multiple mandates linked to sources of finance and are accountable to all. Managing multiple accountabilities is problematic for

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<sup>28</sup> International Citizen Service (ICS) provides overseas volunteer placements for 18-25 year olds and Team Leader placements for 23-35 year olds. ICS is funded by the UK Government (ICS, 2019).



HCOs because they have to report in different and complex ways to a variety of different groups and interests.

Direct access to donor funding has increased HCOs' power over resources in IVCOs 1 and 3, leading to changes in the distribution of power relations between HCOs and the head offices as demonstrated in the contrasting statements below:

*"[An international donor] has said to us that they don't want the money to go to [IVCO3]. They are going to pay us, and we decide what we contribute upwards!"* (HCO 9)

*"We still report to [IVCO3] and [IVCO3] reports to DFID, but we also have donors that we have to account to... One of the major impacts [is that] .... programme managers [have] divided attention between volunteers and the donors."* (HCO 8)

The number of different relationships that HCOs are required to negotiate underlines the similarity of their role to boundary managers in the literature.

IVCO5, however, continues to receive unrestricted funding from its government for thematic areas of development using IVS. Consequently, IVCO5 has had the power to maintain and grow its presence worldwide since its inception in the 1960s, without the need to significantly revise its organisational governance structures and policies. This implies a high level of institutional trust both in its home country and abroad that may also be related to the foreign policy of its government:

*"[IVCO5] was a combination of the time that it was created...in our history ... If it was just a development thing .....then probably your tendency is to not hold on to the model so much.... [but IVCO5's] idea was young people going to serve, so that's really stuck!"* (HQ 6)

This description of IVCO5 implies a strategic decision taken *against* changing a formula that appears to have a historical significance and serves the IVCO's purpose at the same time. The respondent further clarified that the organisational model has *"three equally rated goals: development impacts.... cultural exchange, and ...bringing the learning home from where [the*

*volunteers] are.*” (HQ 6) However, participants reveal that the assumption that the three goals of IVCO5 are equally weighted was either never correct, or has changed over time to the detriment of the first two goals, or that IVCO5 is out of touch with the changes in what might be considered its client-base (VOL 5, 15, 18). One of the participants explained:

*“It took me a year and a half of my placement until I found something to do that I personally could feel was worthwhile.... But the Programme Office will report that as a tick in the box, earning them credit for how well they managed my placement. But that wouldn’t be true.”* (VOL 18)

Although the HCO of IVCO5 is less vulnerable to the types of external change that affected IVCOs 1 and 3, it does not exclude it from other possible influences that might impact on the relationship between the HCOs and its head office:

*“[Head office] reach out to the desk-officer to find out something in the field. [But] they really don’t like us to go...I think there’s kind of a mentality of ‘shield the field’... [Some senior IVCO5 staff] are like the second or third highest-ranking official with the...embassy. I don’t really know what that means, but it does suggest power.”* (HQ 6)

This implies that the power of some HCOs of IVCO5 lies in sources which are outside the mandates of IVS, for example, the foreign policy of IVCO5’s home country, which allow IVCO5 to continue to enjoy the institutional trust and support of its government without the requirement for external accountability or response to donor imperatives for aid-effectiveness. It also helps explain why IVCO5 continues to deliver “mixed achievements in its goal to help...African nations meet that their need for “trained manpower” (Amin, 2014, p. 321).

This section has shown that the primary aim of IVC organisations at the point of inception, as well as external influences, not only affect organisational structures and strategies of IVCOs, but the way relationships are negotiated between HCOs and their head offices. IVCOs that originally started, and continued to evolve, as development organisations, created and used organisational structures for information exchange and feedback mechanisms that allowed both HCOs and head offices to recognise and adapt to external and internal trends. There is openness in sharing power

over resources and power to influence which and facilitates a climate of trust between the HCO and the head office. Information sharing that had its origins in intra-organisational institutional trust has subsequently developed into process-based trust over time as both the HCO and head office meet each other's expectations. However, IVCOs that were set up to promote international volunteering as their focus were less prepared to respond to pressures from external changes. This was because originally, funding support for their work was grounded in institutional trust and value-based expectations of volunteering between the funders and the IVCOs, but not necessarily on the contribution of IVS to the long term aims of those development interventions. Thus information exchange and an outwardly-directed perspective on changes in international trends were not priorities for placement-focused IVCOs and did little to encourage the potential for institutional trust between the IVCO and their donors, and the HCO and the head office, to develop into process-based trust. Consequently, global pressures such as the demands of professionalization, the move towards restricted funding and an evidence-based approach to reporting had a sudden and severe impact on power relations (over both resources and to influence) between the IVCO and their donors and the HCOs; diminishing the levels of institutional trust and leading to a moral hazard in the relationships.

The level of IVCOs' organisational preparedness to meet external and internal challenges exposes the HCOs to vulnerabilities in responding to policy enactment. The next section looks at how IVCO organisational policies and procedures affect the way relationships are negotiated between HCOs and their head offices.

### **6.3 HCO-head office relationships in negotiating policies and procedures**

This section argues that unlike the way they are portrayed on IVCO websites, HCOs are not continuous extensions of IVCO head offices. It uses data from interviews and grey literature to examine how the dynamics of power relations, institutional and process-based trust contribute to the 'disconnect' in the relationships between the case study IVCOs' head offices and their HCOs, and how this disconnect impacts on the processes of IVS.

Divisions at the head office/HCO interface were outlined at the IVCO Forum, in October 2016 by a presenter who had, coincidentally, visited HCOs of several IVCOs in Malawi earlier that year and reported at becoming: "Very saddened by the level of 'disconnect' observed between the in-country offices and what [was] being discussed at IVCO forum levels." Table 9 below is an extract of Table 1, showing the governance structures of the five IVCOs obtained from their official websites. It demonstrates their structural similarity to MNCs (Chapter 2, section 2.5) as a group of geographically disparate organisations including a head office and different subsidiaries (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1990, p. 603), where the subsidiaries are "simultaneously embedded in the [MNC's] corporate network and its external local market network" (Li, 2005, p. 78). Table 9 also shows that IVCOs operate decentralised (Chapter 2, section 2.5) management structures across international boundaries with significant decision-making authority at HCO level and differing levels of support provided through regional offices.

IVCO	Head office	Governance	Host country administration
UNV	Bonn, Germany.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Coordinator reports to the UNDP Executive Board.</li> <li>Eight Portfolio Managers oversee a cluster of countries based on a geographical affinity. The Southern African portfolio includes Malawi.</li> </ul>	Programme Officer works through UNDP offices and reports, to the UN Country Team
Peace Corps	Washington DC, USA	Independent agency within the executive branch of the US government. The Director appointed by the US President	Country Director American senior staff and other national staff
GIZ	Bonn, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered as a non-profit enterprise (GmbH) in Germany;</li> <li>Main accountability to the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development</li> <li>It has a Management, a Supervisory and a Private Sector Advisory Board</li> <li>Southern Africa is one of 6 sub-units in the Department overseeing activities in Africa</li> </ul>	Country Director. 70% of in-country staff are German/European. Programme staff include national experts
VSO	London, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Board and Executive Board</li> <li>The CEO heads a management team.</li> <li>The Executive Director is based in 'the regional hub for programming and recruitment across Southern Africa' and includes Malawi</li> </ul>	Country Director and a mixture of national and international staff.
Progressio	London, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CEO heads a management team.</li> <li>A regional fund-raising department in South Africa</li> </ul>	Country Director and national staff

**Table 9:** An extract from Table 1 showing the formal governance structures of the five case study IVCOs (Source: author)

A review of IVCO websites to learn how each IVCO describes the processes of formulating their organisational strategies showed specific references to consultations with multi- and bilateral

stakeholders, the private sector, civil society and partners from cooperating countries, past annual reports and research documents. Organigrams are available online on the GIZ, and the Peace Corps websites and a descriptive version are available on the UNV website. Although VSO and Progressio websites<sup>29</sup> present key members of their Trustee and Executive Boards, no further detail is provided to show IVCO organisational structures. Reference is made to a “hub for programming and recruitment across Southern Africa”, including Malawi, on the VSO website, where VSO’s Executive Director is based. Except for GIZ website, which contains frequent references to the work of their HCOs’ staff and ongoing staff development initiatives, IVCO official websites’ direct references to their HCOs are very limited. When HCOs are mentioned, the impression given is often that of an extension of the parent organisation providing support for volunteers in the host country (Chapter 5, section 5.3.2).

More recently it has become possible to access some information about individual HCOs of IVCOs directly from their websites describing their range of thematic activities as well as a sample of projects typically including photographs and stories from volunteers. Lists of staff names and job titles of are sometimes present on some HCO websites (Peace Corps, 2016d; VSO Malawi, 2018) but it is not always possible to ascertain how current these lists are.

The scarcity of reference to HCOs on IVCO websites is not entirely unexpected in light of the purpose of the websites which are likely to have been designed to appeal to target audiences such as international donor agencies, potential service recipient countries and people interested in volunteering in a foreign country. There may also be other explanations for the general absence of references to HCOs. For example, it may be a strategic decision to maintain an emphasis on the volunteers and volunteering as an organisational value; to signify the authority of head offices in strategic decision-making, or the operational autonomy of the HCOs, or it may just reflect a lack of sensitivity in acknowledging the involvement of HCOs. Whatever the underlying reasons may be, it conveys a presumption of institutional and characteristic-based trust, rather than recourse to

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<sup>29</sup> The closure of Progressio took place in March 27, 2017. The information provided here was obtained from the website while it was still active, between January 2016 and March 2017.

process-based trust, between head offices and HCOs, that helps maintain IVCO head offices' authority over strategic decision-making but understates the role and contribution of HCOs to IVS programmes.

Integrating HCOs into the IVCOs' overall strategy is not without challenges. Andersson and Forsgren (1996, p. 489) argue that a subsidiary's behaviour is shaped not only by the different control mechanisms used by the head office to integrate the subsidiary within the parent organisation's overall strategy but also by the professional and social networks inside and outside the organisation. Since the role of HCOs in decentralised IVCO organisations parallels that of MNC subsidiaries (Chapter 2, section 2.5) Andersson and Forsgren (1996, p. 489) argument is also applicable to HCOs, as illustrated by the example below:

*"The [One] challenge is my government sets all sorts of rules under which I have to work.....it means I have to determine my layer of cooperation in the ministry X [in Malawi]."* (HCO 1)

This statement from a participant from IVCO2 shows that although its head office, under the umbrella of its government, has power over the framework in which the HCO operates; the HCO has the power to manoeuvre within that framework, hence suggesting the presence of both institutional and process-based trust between HCO and head office. However, a statement from a participant from the HCO in IVCO3 implies a different relationship between the HCO and head office:

*"Our approach to delivering[IVCO3's] objectives has become more opportunistic....we kind of put the [IVCO3's organisational] strategy to the side a little bit and focused on areas that we were doing well in... to bring in restricted income."* (HCO 4)

The contrasting statements among HCO participants underline the different organisational focus on development (IVCOs 2 and 4) versus placement (IVCOs 1, 3 and 5) outlined in the previous section. Unlike the previous participant from IVCO2 whose statement revealed the HCO's power to manoeuvre within the framework of its mandate from head office, the above statement suggests that increase in power over resources ('bringing in restricted income') stimulated the HCO to

detach itself from working within IVCO3's strategic framework. Moreover, it is not clear from the statement whether approval was required or sought through formal channels, to circumvent the official strategy. There is also an implied notion that 'the areas where [the HCO] was doing well' either did not fit within the organisational strategy or the HCO was unable to influence the strategy. This shows that the HCO has power over resources but lacks power to influence the integration of its organisational aims into the wider intra-organisational policies and strategies of the IVCO. Thus by partially, or entirely withholding information about its activities from head office, it can continue to do what it can 'do well'.

By definition, trust-building entails a process through which expectations are agreed and then repetitively realised over time, but it does not exclude other types of trust being present at the same time:

*"[What holds me back are] the organisational policies which are sometimes rigid; [the head office] says: "We are working on that..." But the policies haven't changed. [Then] if anything goes wrong, they will forget about the email communications, the Skype discussions, [and] say, "Let's see what the policies are saying." (HCO 10)*

*"There's [a]channel [for raising HCO concerns higher up the IVCO organisation] ....because now we're supposed to report to the regional office....but [staff] just don't bother.... [because we] don't know the people [at the regional office]." (HCO 6)*

The statements demonstrate IVCO head offices' reliance on institutional trust in maintaining their authority over organisational policies and procedures. They concur with the literature on MNCs (Chapter 2, section 2.5) that while formal internal procedures governing accountabilities, effective communications and accuracy of information exchange are important, informal factors that contribute to trust-building such as reciprocal interactions and cultivating personal relations, can also influence behaviours in ways that procedures and contracts alone, cannot (Hardy et al., 1998; Robinson, et al., 2000; Mawdsley, et al., 2005).

The absence of power to influence organisational processes, or when their concerns are not being addressed, frustrates HCOs' staff and can lead to the erosion of institutional trust while restricting the construction of process-based trust, ultimately, leading to loss of trust completely:

*“The [policies regarding the] management of volunteers [have] remained the same...but then the work of the Programme Managers has changed....that caused quite a number of confrontations between staff and volunteers, and staff and management, and staff and [head office] which, some of those conflicts led to staff deciding to leave; that this is a very difficult place to work.” (HCO 8)*

Hardy, et al. (1998, p. 10) caution that when organisations are constructed in ways that do not allow members ‘to test the truth, legitimacy, sincerity, or clarity of claims made on them’ by the structures of power, the results are likely to be lack of flexibility rather than shared learning, domination rather than authority, and manipulation rather than cooperation. This implies that the relationship between HCOs and IVCO head offices is linked to the spaces and opportunities for the former to not only participate in internal strategy and policy decision-making processes but to benefit from follow up actions and positive change as a result of their inputs. The divide between head office and HCO staff is more noticeable in IVCOs where spaces and opportunities within the organisation for interaction and participation of HCOs’ staff are limited. The following two quotations from IVCO3 represent contradictions between policy and practice where the understanding of the HCO staff that they have total autonomy for programmatic decisions, as long as they reflect IVCO3’s values and principles, is constrained by the organisation’s administrative procedures:

*“The direction is in terms of [a] process that reflects IVCO3’s values, principles, and the behaviour that we want to see, but ultimately decisions on what you want to work in, come from that process that’s undertaken locally.” (HCO 4)*

*“The challenges [of working with head office] are the bureaucracy. There are so many layers. To get even a small thing, you have to go from this person to that person, all the way up.” (HCO 9)*

In this case, when asked if HCO’s staff have a voice in the organisation, the response from the same participant was:

*“No, we don’t. There’s nothing like that. There are policy communication meetings where we attend, and we are told what is changing and why. We just listen, and we can ask questions.” (HCO 9)*



The absence of power to influence intra-organisational processes reflects rigidity in organisational systems that can lead to role uncertainty and conflict of priorities among the staff of HCOs. Unresolved role uncertainty and the ongoing conflict in priorities diminish institutional trust between HCOs and their head office and limit opportunities to generate or build upon process-based trust and result in the frustration of staff who feel unable to do their work. The data paint a picture of the HCOs of IVCO1 and IVCO3 being caught between loyalty to head office, and organisational survival through increasing opportunities to access restricted income - increased power over resources - from international donors:

*“IVCO3 were saying: “We are a volunteer agency. So your priority should be the volunteers”. But at the same time there are projects that have to be managed; deadlines have to be met, [staff] have to manage the partners..... see what the community is doing; monitoring and evaluation, analysing the context of the village, and all those things that made quite a lot of work for the staff. [But] IVCO3 did not adjust the way the volunteers should be managed.” (HCO 8)*

It must be noted that the absence of opportunities for HCOs to contribute to organisational processes is not exclusive to individual IVCOs or even to particular levels within IVCOs internal structures. Indeed, they exist in all organisations and can continue to extend as organisations expand internationally (Fincham and Rhodes, 1994). Challenges are discernible in the relationships between HCOs and head offices of all of the five IVCOs through the defensive attitudes and behaviours of HCO staff, although they may be less visible, or more skilfully mitigated by some IVCOs than others. Participant descriptions of HCO attitudes included *“a mentality of ‘shield the field’” (HQ6), “always a bit afraid [when the volunteers] openly talk about...the difficult sides of the programmes” (HQ 4), and “huge resistance [to] transparency [of information]” (VOL 16).*

Increased perception of risk reduces process-based trust in relationships and increases fears among actors that information shared might be used to disadvantage the owner of the information when relationships are being negotiated (Koeszegi, 2004; Olekalns and Smith, 2009). Perceived risk of failure, lack of clarity of roles, responsibilities, and the complexities of managing diverse personnel

can replace institutional or process-based trust with defensive strategies to minimise risk and maintain control of the situation. Staff of placement-focused HCOs were found to use a range of risk prevention tactics affecting information disclosure through noncompliance with agreed actions or with IVCO policy requirements, for examples, failure or refusal to conduct volunteer performance reviews (HCO 6, 8), inaccurate use, or omission of data in reports (HCO 6, 8, VOL 16); use of assumptions instead of factual information (HCO 6, 10, VOL 5, 18); incorrect attribution of costs or benefits, and misrepresentation of financial data (HCO 6,10, 12). Two examples are provided below:

*“Nobody has responded [to the report from head-office] ....There hasn’t been any reference to say,” ....What are we doing about it?” Maybe, in the year, management will look into it.” (HCO 6)*

*“The [HCO] staff didn’t seem to understand the issue...and in response to my complaints I was told to think creatively and work with the counterpart and the community to identify a project.”(VOL 18)*

Notably, the participants above demonstrate their awareness, yet acceptance of the weaknesses of organisational structures and processes that are designed to capture and respond to information exchange. Participants statements reveal that expectations of any follow-up action or changes resulting from the scrutiny of the content of the reports are low or perceived as non-existent in IVCOs1, 3 and 5 (HCO 6, 8, 9,10, VOL 5, 9,10,11, 12, 15,17, 18). This resonates with insights from the literature on boundary organisations (Chapter 2, section 2.6) in respect of the purpose of policies or procedures that apply to the production of information that is neither scrutinised for the integrity of the content nor subject to internal accountabilities. Thus, it resembles a ‘moral hazard’ (Guston, 1999, p. 93) in the relationships between the HCO and its head office to which the HCO is accountable. Pockets of information become tied to individuals or groups within the organisation as a means of power over knowledge. This attitude towards knowledge sharing was found to varying degrees in the response from participants from all placement-focused IVCOs. The example below illustrates:

*“There’s this idea of information silos [at the HCO]; the more you hold that no-one else knows, the more power you seem to have.” (VOL 16)*

Asymmetry of information reinforces role uncertainty, leads to suspicion and mistrust (Nierenberg, 1987; Blomqvist, 1997; Butler, 1999) and has both operational and motivational consequences for the HCOs. Staff find themselves struggling in roles that are ill-defined or for which they are not qualified, yet they feel unable to refuse for fear of risking their credibility or even their livelihood:

*“Sometimes you look, and you see they [the staff] also seem to be struggling; they don’t understand what their roles are. So it’s been..... a struggle because you are working under someone who is not clear with their job description, leave alone yours.” (VOL 12)*

There are indications of lack of role clarity among HCO staff in IVCO3 and IVCO5 that illustrate the disconnect between head office and HCO and the failure of head office to recognise, acknowledge and address the new and changing demands on HCO functions:

*“[HCO] staff that are directly supporting us are Malawians, not [technically qualified] though.....they’re running things, and they don’t know what should be done: “I can’t give you any recommendations; I know nothing about the...field.”” (VOL 5)*

The literature on power in Chapter 3 (section 3.4) showed that in the presence of a dominant power, weak actors might either consent through lack of choice or because they feel it is in their interest; they may resist by engaging in opportunistic behaviour, or they may withdraw and leave. This was reflected in staff retention levels in IVCO3 where, in one programme sector alone, there had been three different heads of the programme in less than two years, and a further seven programme managers and three volunteers resigned their roles and left between January and August 2016.

It is inevitable, therefore, that consequences of operational weaknesses at HCOs can emerge at the project implementation level, in ways that affect project aims from their original purpose, leading to delays and frustrations of partners and beneficiaries during programme delivery. The statement below is from a partner in a programme where three members of programme staff were new, one of whom, and three volunteers, left in less than a year.

*“[The HCO], told us that the contractor will just construct this one for at least a month, but it took more than.... three months....[Then the bricks were not strong. [But] ...To whom are you going to report?... We are supposed to start in September [2015] but..... the [equipment arrived] three weeks ago [16<sup>th</sup> April 2016]. We were told, the project must be three years, but we have spent one year already....without doing nothing [sic]...how are you going to implement the project?” (PTNR 5)*

The annual report (2015-16) for this IVCO, showed no impediments to programme delivery, and declared statistics that would have been astonishing achievements, even with unusually stable staffing, extraordinary project coordination efficiency, and rigidly controlled administrative processes. These findings corroborate van Eekelen’s (2012) report on the prevalence of heroic assumptions, incorrect attributions, and inflated statistics in some IVCO reports, and reaffirms that they continue to be used in practice.

This highlights several issues of concern for this research. First, the omission of facts and erroneous reporting or attribution of data in official documents suggest that either the report submitted by the HCO was incorrect, or that it was not scrutinised by head office or both. All three possibilities reflect weaknesses in policies and procedures that undervalue the integrity of the information being shared and reciprocal feedback and constrain process-based trust-building between the HCO and head office. The second issue of concern is that problems that were reported in 2012 continued to exist in 2016. HCOs may have incentives to withhold information that might expose their internal practices, or that may reveal issues that might suggest a level of failure (Lewis, 2014) since admitting failure may be perceived as potentially harmful to their status within the organisation and diminish institutional or characteristic-based trust with head office. This also reinforces critique of professionalization in the literature on development management (Chapter 2, section 2.3) where it is argued that the emphasis by aid agencies on reporting measurable data rather than on the evaluation of indirect or negative outcomes means that decision-making procedures are unable to support more positive or sustainable development outcomes (Mawdsley et al., 2005; Choudry and Kapoor, 2013; Gulrajani, 2014)

The above data do not go uncontested. A participant from IVCO1 described how recently increased involvement through formal reporting procedures and follow up discussions to agree on actions, frequent visits from, and regular conversations with the regional line manager, had enhanced HCO staff's ability to *"feed into the strategy for the region"* and *"constant skype chats with colleagues in [head office]"*. One successful outcome was a change in recruitment policy from head office, instigated by the participant, to include advertising volunteer vacancies in national newspapers in Malawi. The participant's experience illustrates that process-based trust is more likely to develop when in-house formal and informal relationships encourage contributions from staff and volunteers. Furthermore, conformance to policies and procedures of both IVCO2 and IVCO4 are channelled through negotiated structures and agreements with an external overseeing authority – the institutional donor. A participant from IVCO2 explains:

*"Our main organisational objectives are negotiated with the Government ministry...and we have one main aim in all the system: that we have to provide technical assistance in the area of international development."* (HQ 2)

The negotiation process, therefore, is embedded in the long-term relationships between the ministry that has the power over the negotiation agenda and the disbursement of funds, and IVCO2 that is expected to have resources and capacity to deliver the agreed objectives through its HCOs working alongside public and private sector partners and target beneficiaries in the host country:

*"[The Ministry] issues the commissions with specified objectives and performance indicators, but the in-country office decides which structure and [personnel] instruments to use to deliver the objectives, for example, through local NGOs; or a team led by an international leader engaging a national expert and volunteers."* (HCO 2)

The continuity of the relationship allows the opportunity for process-based trust to develop at different levels of organisational structure and support knowledge sharing and collaborative behaviours among the staff of both HCO and head office, as exemplified by the participant below:

*"I enjoy being part of the [HCO] team....The position I am [is] purely technical, and when I see a risk, I should be able to read [the situation] and forward it to the right desk.....I like being here."* (HCO 3)

The consistency of approach between policy and practice of IVS illustrates the strength of both institutional and process-based trust between HCO and head office. For instance, the strategic aim of IVCO2 was described by senior personnel at the head office as “*A multi-level and multi-actor approach*” (HQ 4). At host country level, not only were the same terms used by the Country Director and programme management staff, but there is a recognition that “*a single input would not work....[so at] project evaluation we... prepare a team who are professionals and who are in favour of the Malawi partner*” (HCO 1). The consistency of implementation of the strategy was visible and active in practice with a team of HCO staff, including specialist Malawian advisors and volunteers, assigned to placements at different institutional levels such as in Malawian ministries, local government and community levels, according to their expertise and the objectives of the roles. The programmes’ designs include a comprehensive communication strategy consisting of regular and frequent reviews involving the entire team as well as stakeholder representatives. Interviews with HCO staff, senior Malawian officials and District officers, as well as volunteers, confirmed the multi-level and multi-actor team approach in diverse programmes such as Social Protection and Maternal Health. There were few, if any, signs of staff or volunteer dissatisfaction, and the overall impression was one of prevalent and growing process-based trust, as one volunteer described:

*“I feel very much attached to the team here. So it’s not like you are outside[r]. I feel here, most of the people are very content with their jobs.”* (VOL 3)

This view was reinforced by interviews with other volunteers, their counterparts and beneficiaries, and observations at project implementation level, that showed similar appreciation of the received support and opportunities for open dialogue among the multiple actors and stakeholders of IVCO2 (PTNR 1, 2, CPRT 5, VOL 4, 2, 3, 14).

This section has shown how internal organisational factors influence the processes of knowledge transfer, types of trust, and power relations in the way relationships are negotiated between HCOs and IVCO head offices, and how the impact on the HCOs day to day work. Internal processes that encourage contributions from staff and volunteers generate opportunities for building process-

based trust at all levels of organisational structure, support knowledge sharing and promote collaborative behaviours among the staff of both HCO and head office. In contrast, maintaining central authority over organisational processes diminishes institutional trust between HCOs and their head office. The absence of power to influence intra-organisational processes steers HCOs staff to adopt strategies that minimise risk, with subsequent harm to the aims, processes and outcomes of IVS and the delivery of the development project.

Although the formal structures, policies and procedures are instruments of maintaining control over organisational objectives, IVCOs are also recognised in the literature on NGO management as value-based organisations (Chapter 2, section 2.4) and are expected to be consistent in their approach towards their own staff, as they are towards their target beneficiaries. Section 6.3 examines how the way IVCO organisational values and principles are enacted internally towards their staff affects the way relationship is negotiated between the HCOs and their head office.

## **6.4 Walking the Talk**

How a development organisation behaves internally towards its staff should be consistent with its declared approach towards its external target beneficiaries; otherwise, inconsistencies can lead to tensions within the organisation (Kaplan, 2002). This section argues that the perceived value of the resources and support promised or made available to HCO staff by head office is related not only to the power of the head office over the resource allocations but also relies on the transparency and mechanisms for these allocations within the wider organisation. It starts by looking at general perspectives across all IVCOs and their HCOs, before differentiating practices between development-focused and placement focused IVCOs and the implications of these practices on the relationship between HCOs and their head offices.

IVCO commitment to staff training and development and fair remunerations packages are seen by HCO staff as empowering and indicative of shared organisational values while the absence of parity in benefit packages and staff development activities are considered disempowering. In general, cultural differences are less pronounced between national and foreign employees, most of

whom have established careers in international development. Unsurprisingly then, remuneration packages play a crucial role in staff motivation and the way they perceive the commitment and loyalty of the parent organisation to them as individuals and as an organisational unit (HCO 5, 6, 10, 8). There is a strong indication that not only low levels of remuneration impact on the livelihoods of HCO staff but reflect how they perceive the value of their relationship with the head office:

*“[IVCO3] could maximise staff and get the best of them, if they also [were] seen to care and give people a good package....Staff are unhappy.... We have had lots of staff leave; people are staying because they’ve got nowhere to go. People like me...” (HCO 6)*

The above statement supports Woolthuis et al.’s (2005, pp. 832–3) argument that although it is possible for trust and contractual agreement to be complementary and mutually enforceable, “a contract is not always effective in reaching good outcomes.... nor guarantee relationship success.” The quotation below is an example of the level of frustration among national staff, but also indicates their feelings of helplessness in being able to bring about positive change:

*“The [head] office...usually tell us: “We get this much [funding], but we also have so many people who get their salaries from the same pot, so this is how much we can afford to give you as Malawi”; basically.... the money that really trickles down to the developing countries... they reduce by 40 or 50 per cent.” (HCO 10)*

The above quotation reveals, firstly, that the staff feel they are not receiving the correct level of salary for the work that they do, but there is also the suggestion that lack of transparency in financial accounting is creating the impression that they are being ‘cheated’ out of a reasonable salary. It suggests that the IVCO head office uses organisational policies and processes in a manner that undermines trust-generation and weaken the organisational commitment of HCO staff (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

IVCOs’ increasing reliance on restricted incomes from donor-initiated programmes or projects, implies that staff and volunteers’ remuneration packages are components of project budget proposals. This is widely reported among participants from all IVCOs in this research (HQ 2, 4; HCO 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10), and one example is provided below:



*“[All staff are funded by] the programme funds. Only the Country Director is [funded] from overheads. It’s one programme package from [programme] manager to [the volunteer].” (HQ 2)*

This does not, however, explain the underlying reasons for the vastly different remuneration packages received by staff and volunteers of development-focused HCOs and placement-focused HCOs, particularly as they often collaborate with several of the same INGOs or international aid agencies<sup>30</sup>. Staff satisfaction was seen to be related to salaries as the only dissatisfied participants were the HCO staff of placement-focused IVCOs 1 and 3<sup>31</sup>. While parity of remuneration packages between national and international staff is a symptom of customary practice in the wider development sector (Fowler, 1997) and not specific to IVCOs (HCO 10, 5), staff salary and benefit packages are matters of internal human resource policy and procedures for each IVCO organisation, consequently they directly affect the day to day functions of HCOs.

Considerations of fairness in remuneration packages call for reflection on the points made in Chapter 4 (section 4.5), describing the contextual background of Malawi as one of the poorest countries in the world. There is a growing demand for educated and qualified nationals as illustrated by an HCO’s vacancy advertisement in Appendix 3. Qualified national professionals, some of whom have been educated in countries in Europe and America, are still relatively limited in numbers and prefer to work in international organisations where there are favourable terms of employment, more job security, and access to the opportunities that international organisations offer:

*“There are plenty of jobs out there, and people have to decide whether it’s worth it: ....Which place should I go to, should I go to the one that pays [a]£100 or I go to one that pays £700?” (HCO 8)*

Leaving the organisation is an option that may not be available to all employees as it may represent uncertainties such as a risk of job security, problems of logistics such as distance from the base, or

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<sup>30</sup> It was not possible to discover the precise remuneration packages for staff of different IVCOs and estimation could only be based on observation of and indicators for staff retention and satisfaction based on attitudes and information gained from the interviews.

<sup>31</sup> It was not possible to obtain data from the HCO staff of IVCO5.

inadequate qualifications. Grievance emerges in different ways among dissatisfied staff who may consent to the power of head office over resources (remuneration) while resisting through what Scott (1985, p. xvi) refers to as the “everyday forms of resistance” of the weak over the strong (Chapter 3, section 3.4):

*“Because [the staff] are frustrated....instead of putting in 99%; they’re just putting 50%. ....[or] they’re taking it out on the wrong people like the volunteers....[or] they’re finding their own ways of making money.... there have been a lot of staff stealing funds .... just because they’re not rewarded for what they do.” (HCO 6)*

Despite increased opportunities for qualified national professionals to work in IVCOs and HCOs, they experience disparity between their remuneration packages and those of their foreign colleagues. Several interviewees from placement-focused HCOs expressed that HCO staff’s dissatisfaction is not only related to being considered undervalued and underpaid but the blatant disparity between terms and conditions and benefit packages enjoyed by international staff that add further cause for disappointment (HCO 10,5, 6, 8). One example illustrates:

*“The remuneration [for internationals] is double that for [nationals]. [Also], they... get their salaries [in] Pounds [sterling], and the locals are getting Kwachas<sup>32</sup> ... [so] internationals are cushioned against the effects of local inflation<sup>33</sup>, but the Malawian [staff] are not.” (HCO 10)*

The above quotes reflect Caprar’s (2011, p. 608) observation of obstacles in ‘noticing’ the HCO staff, which allow “hardship benefits to expatriate employees but not to local employees...[and credit] expatriates with cultural challenges, but consider it less necessary to worry about host country nationals.” The examples also suggest that in these instances, while the placement-focused HCOs have autonomy concerning programmatic decisions, head office retains the power to overrule decisions that relate to organisational policies and procedures, without providing an opportunity for negotiation. This reinforces historical notions of Western dominance and

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<sup>32</sup> Kwacha is a unit of Malawian currency. Average equivalence £1 = 921.5 MKW at the time of fieldwork

<sup>33</sup> Depreciation of currency is a matter of significant fluctuation as it dependent on the production of the harvest of tobacco, Malawi’s most important exportable product. During 8 weeks of fieldwork the Kwacha fluctuated against the £ by 200MKW due to drought conditions impacting on the tobacco harvest

superiority by conveying more value and trust based on the Western characteristics of international staff while suppressing the power of national staff to influence organisational policies towards more equitable outcomes. It represents a contradiction of the espoused principles of IVCOs and hence, affects the personal and professional commitment, and loyalty, of the HCO's staff to the parent organisation, potentially leading to a weakening of institutional trust of HCOs in their head office.

*“[Head office] are saying ‘our premise is that locals are equal’ and then [colleagues are] getting more [money] as ex-pats, you see?... Malawians are not represented... Malawians are supposed to be put in their place ....and get nothing.” (HCO 10)*

The disparity of remunerations between national and international staff is not unusual in INGOs and other development agencies, however, the sensitivity of the issues is more pronounced in IVCOs because the packages and benefits received by volunteers can sometimes exceed those of the employed staff of placement-focused HCOs.

*“[The HCO staff] are not looking at it like you really volunteered, left your other job and come here to support [sic]... They look at you like you just come to look for jobs in their country... [and] we are benefitting from their land.” (VOL 12)*

The above statement shows that volunteers can be perceived by HCO employees as having more power to access resources, as well as more (apparent) power to influence head office - through complaint procedures - than the HCO staff who are required to coordinate their work and welfare (Chapter 5, sections 5.4 and 5.5). It makes HCO staff question their own value and work, within the wider organisation and, again, reinforces unequal power relations and mistrust of head office to ‘walk the talk’ of their espoused principles in their relationship with their HCOs’ staff.

*“There has been real resentment [towards head office] ....[resulting in] some bad attitudes among staff.... [Several volunteers had to leave because] they felt that they hadn’t been supported. There are some staff that will not provide basic support to volunteers.” (HCO 8)*

Access to adequate and fit for purpose resources such as office space and equipment, and budgetary allocations for transportation, fuel allowance and expenses for carrying out additional activities allows HCOs to be more effective in the wider aspects of their roles. However, there is a disparity between IVCOs in their ability to justify and defend the necessary resources for similar programmes. For example, while some can justify full use of a car for volunteers working in rural areas (VOL 1, 2, 3, 5), the range of support by other IVCOs include a motorbike (VOL 11, 12), a bicycle (VOL 18), cost of fuel only (VOL 9), or insistence on use of public transport (VOL 9). This implies that although donors are open to considerations of justifiable remuneration and resource packages for IVS placements in development projects, there are differences between HCOs of development-focused and placement-focused IVCOs in their power to influence donors to reach a favourable outcome (see Appendix 2). The inability of some placement-focused HCOs to negotiate favourable remuneration packages and resources to carry out their work is either an indication of capacity shortfalls at the HCO or reflects an IVCO policy, both of which constrain the day to day functioning of the HCO. The impact on HCO staff behaviour is observed in compliance to policy and procedures, staff retention, effective communication and employee attitude towards their work and colleagues of IVCOs 1, 3 and 5 (HCO 8, 6, 10). One example is given below:

*“Local staff, are not happy so....if they want a raise [in wages], and the management seems not to be addressing it, they tend to take it out on...the volunteers.” (HCO 6)*

These attitudes lead to delays and obstructions during project implementation (VOL 9, 10, 11), conflict with volunteers (VOL 17, 18, 11, 12) and in some cases volunteer departures (VOL 12, 11, 16). The consequences can be severe, not only for the HCO and the volunteers but also for the continuity and consistency in the contribution of IVS to the processes and outcomes of development projects:

*“I asked for a small grant and [the HCO] accommodated to that [sic]...but they didn’t pay the money!.... This office is not functioning ... I said: if I don’t hear anything before the end of September, I’m going to stop.... I didn’t hear anything and... I said: ‘OK now, this is enough.’ because I didn’t see much improvement in the [HCO]”. (VOL 10)*

Crucially, several HCO staff of placement-focused IVCOs 1 and 3 (HCO 6, 8, 9, 10) acknowledged a history of complaints to head office by volunteers, who had been disappointed or frustrated by the lack of support from HCO. However, as shown in the previous section, no discernible action or change had resulted in head office's response to the complaints (HCO 6, 8, 5, 11). One of the volunteers who had complained to head office explained:

*“All these volunteers are going out to Malawi, many of them are leaving, and nobody [at the head office] seems to even care about the reasons or doing anything about it... [I asked at the head office]: “There are so many volunteers that leave Malawi early, why don't you deal with it?.... You need to acknowledge how many volunteers leave Malawi early. ””*  
(VOL 11)

As shown in Chapter 3, trust develops out of a process where shared values, knowledge, integrity, reliability, and fairness provide the backdrop for collaborative behaviour. The statement below suggests that although institutional trust can provide the basis for alignment between head office and HCOs, maintaining institutional trust relies on processes that allow trust to be strengthened by meeting the expectations of HCO staff in respect of their work and career prospects:

*“There's always room for better work for [IVCO3] if [IVCO3] are willing to invest in staff because the staff that [IVCO3] has, they are qualified staff - professionals.”* (HCO 6)

Resource allocation at the host country office level is more than simply remuneration packages. While financial rewards are significant incentives, the association of voluntary work with the institutional values of IVCOs is likely to impact on the expectation of its staff. They are likely to be motivated by respect and appreciation of their efforts and the merits of their professional and personal contributions to the organisation (Fowler, 1997; Li, 2005). These less tangible indicators of employee performance are important but neglected because they are difficult to measure (Lister, 1999; Mawdsley et al., 2005). However, their importance is confirmed in the examples of HCO staff of development-focused IVCOs for whom remuneration did not appear to be a problem, and there were no significant or observable indicators of dissatisfaction in the HCO staff turnovers,

attitudes, or responsiveness. The quote below from a senior staff member from IVCO2 shows recognition of the need for a strategic approach towards staff development:

*“Leaders...have this very complex set up of different levels and different types of personnel ...The training is...focused on how to manage programmes .....Volunteers with managers sit together...to know each other better, but as well to have the same comprehension on how the system is working.” (HQ 4)*

However, this type of strategic approach to staff training and development for HCO staff was not apparent in any of the participant responses or documents from other IVCOs in this research, other than in the format of in-house short courses and technical workshops. For IVCO3, as seen in the quotation below, any form of useful training appears to have stopped completely:

*“The [staff] don’t have any [in-house] training apart from induction...The [management] are saying [it is] because it’s all donor money [now] and it’s not important to donors in the proposals when they are written and [IVCO3] doesn’t have resources to train people. I’ve been here since 2002...[and] have a degree in Human Resource Management [but] I haven’t grown that much. So, I’m not competitive<sup>34</sup>” (HCO 6).*

The above quotation shows the importance of personal development and career progression to HCO staff without which, their motivation can be affected, or they can feel taken for granted and trapped in positions that they are unable to improve upon.

This section has shown that the perceived value of the resources and support promised or made available to HCOs by head office are seen by HCO staff as indicative of IVCOs ‘Walking the Talk’ of their espoused principles and shared organisational values. Tensions related to value-related disparities between HCOs and their head offices are not unusual in INGOs and other development agencies, but the association of voluntary work with the institutional values of IVCOs influences the expectation of its staff in respect of consistency between the external and internal approach taken by head office to its proclaimed principles. It has been shown that IVCOs’ internal policies

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<sup>34</sup> Based on interaction with this participant, the interpretation of her final statement is likely to be: *“I have not developed personally; I can no longer match competition from others with my qualifications.”*

and procedures are important indicators of organisational practices that support process-based trust generation and strengthen the organisational commitment of HCO staff to their parent organisation. In particular, policies that are related to i) fairness of remuneration packages; ii) transparency in financial accounting; iii) parity of the terms, conditions and benefit packages between national and international staff; iv) power to access resources to carry out their work, and v) opportunities for personal development and career progression

Tensions arise between HCOs and their head office when HCO staff are powerless to influence favourable outcomes in negotiating a relationship with head office and is more noticeable in placement-focused HCOs. This diminishes institutional trust and opportunities to build process-based trust between the staff of HCOs and their head offices.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that HCOs are not seamless extensions of IVCO head office and that the way IVCOs describe the roles of HCOs is not always consistent with the way HCOs perceive and experience them. The relationships between HCOs and IVCO head offices are shaped by the history of the way external factors have been interpreted into internal policy and practice by IVCO organisations since their inception. Differences emerge between IVCOs that were focused on development (IVCOs 2 and 4) rather than voluntary service (IVCOs 1, 3 and 5) at inception, showing how the latter were less equipped to respond to external changes that were taking place at HCO operations level over the years. External influences impacted on the intra-organisational processes, distribution of power and the types of trust between HCOs and their head offices.

Study of the relationships shows that while institutional trust is embedded within the relationship between HCOs and their head offices, openness in knowledge sharing promotes process-based trust, encourages collective behaviours, and is observed to be more important in strengthening intra-organisational relations between HCOs and IVCO head offices. If the HCOs are not resourced properly or their concerns are not addressed, the embedded institutional trust in the organisation

becomes eroded as staff adopt informal coping mechanisms to address the resource and administrative constraints that they face. Consequently, both HCOs and head offices' management control over the day to day operations is lost, potentially leading to negative attitudes and self-serving practices among HCOs' staff.

The disconnect in the relationships between the HCOs and their head offices, referred to by the IVCO Forum participant at the start of this chapter, reflects an asymmetry of information between the two organisational units. However, it does not always appear to impact on the institutional trust placed on the HCOs by placement-focused IVCO head offices and suggests a 'moral hazards' (Chapter 3, section 3.2.4) in the relationship between them. This suggests an absence of, or unenforced, reporting and feedback structures and processes that allow HCOs the freedom to conduct their work unchecked (Chapter 3, section 3.2.4). The persistence of policies that are not applied, enforced, or reconsidered, lessens their value and efficiency as administrative tools, while the scarcity of opportunities for information exchange leads to role uncertainty and conflict of priorities among the staff, limiting opportunities to generate or build upon process-based trust. The implications are that head offices are, either not fully aware of the everyday practices of the HCOs, or they ignore the challenges being faced by them.

The previous two chapters have shown that HCOs are neither passive facilitators of volunteer placements nor are they entirely submissive to the power of IVCO head office over resources, or always compliant with the parent organisation's rules and procedures. HCOs' function involves managing multiple relationships across the interface of different 'worlds', one of which is the 'world' occupied by international volunteers and the other is the IVCO head office. Another 'world' could be described as the institutional context of development in the host country where HCOs are based, and where they are embedded in, and influenced by, the network of relationships with different IVS stakeholders with diverse interests. This other world will be explored in the next chapter.



## Chapter 7

# Negotiating IVS Relationships in the Institutional Landscape of Development of Malawi

## 7.1 Introduction

HCOs are faced with a complex network of partner-related assumptions that support or limit their ability to steer an IVS programme towards its intended aims. Increasing reliance on restricted funding and resources from international donors as well as head office on the one hand, and the structures of the public institutions of Malawi on the other means that HCOs have to be flexible and creative in negotiating inter-organisational relationships.

This chapter argues that contextual factors in the institutional landscape of development in Malawi influence the dynamics of trust and power relations between the HCOs and their strategic, mobilising and implementing partners in Malawi. The multiplicity of different stakeholders and the competitive arena of development in Malawi make building process-based trust problematic. Nevertheless, the strategic approach of development-focused HCOs to partnerships increases the potential for building trust. In contrast, the fragmented approach to finding projects that can absorb IVS makes placement-focused HCOs over-reliant on institutional and characteristic-based types of trust, which are founded on assumptions that may not be inaccurate, out of date or unsubstantiated, and might not deliver the expectations of trust. The chapter examines the boundaries that HCOs have to manage across three different kinds of inter-organisational relationships. I describe these boundaries that HCOs have to manage as strategic, mobilising and implementing partnerships: strategic stakeholders describe those with whom HCOs' relationships are centred on the long term aims of development intervention in thematic areas of national priority, and include the relevant Malawian Government's ministries and public institutions, as well as multi- and bilateral donor agencies. Mobilising partners denote organisations such as INGOs, local government departments, umbrella organisations, or individuals such as consultants, with whom HCOs have collaborative or cross-cutting relationships in activating and operating the processes of delivering the aims of IVS

and the wider development programme. The staff of partner organisations (for example counterparts to volunteers) and representatives of beneficiary communities or groups with whom HCOs place volunteers in specific projects are referred to as implementing partners of HCOs.

This chapter looks at how power relations impact on, or are impacted by, institutional and characteristic-based trust in the relationships between HCO and their strategic, mobilising and implementing partners, linking them to knowledge sharing as an influential factor in negotiating these relationships. Institutional trust and characteristic-based types of trust are deemed to be important in guiding inter-organisational strategies and decision-making processes of the HCOs and their strategic, mobilising and implementing partners when the opportunities for building and maintaining process-based trust are limited.

**Section 7.2** examines the relationships between the HCOs and their strategic partners: the donor agencies and the Government of Malawi, drawing attention to the interdependence between them. Having multiple strategic partners means that the HCO is not only accountable to the IVCO head office, but also the donor agencies and the host country public institutions. This blurs the distinctions between not only what is being accounted for, but to whom it should be accounted. Uncertainty has an impact on, and is impacted by, knowledge sharing, the types of trust and power relations in the relationships between the strategic partners as each tries to minimise risk within the relationship and advance their interests. It shows that a history of financial irregularities and wider political, structural and capacity issues have led to a loss of institutional trust in the Government of Malawi by the donor agencies and subsequent redirection of funding for development programmes through INGO (including IVCO) host country offices based on both institutional and characteristic based ‘by proxy’ trust of the HCOs. This represents a change in the distribution of power over financial resources among the strategic partners and reflects institutional and characteristic-based trust of donor agencies in IVCOs, and ‘by proxy’ of IVCO host country offices, to demonstrate professionalization in both financial and technical reporting.

**Section 7.3** shows that changes in donor strategy for fund disbursement have created both opportunities and challenges for HCOs as they find themselves in a favoured position for having access to the expertise of international volunteers but in an increasingly competitive environment with other INGOs and HCOs. The inclusion of IVS in development programmes cannot be assumed and has to be justified when negotiating relationships with mobilising partners, for whom IVS may not be a priority. Thus HCOs develop strategies that involve responding to a request or making an offer of an IVS placement to potential mobilising partners who might not have bought into the agenda of IVS. This section argues that the fast-moving and competitive environment of development in Malawi constrains opportunities for knowledge transfer and shared experiences that can support the generations of process-based trust. Consequently, HCOs' relationships with partner organisation are largely reliant on socially-based expectations of institutional or characteristic-based trust, which can be constructed or inflated and are not based on direct experiences. It shows that Malawian partners consent to the power of the HCOs over resources on offer through IVS, for reasons that are sometimes different from the aims of IVS and can impact its processes and outcomes. Six possible reasons for Malawian partners' consent to IVS have been identified from the data: i) cultural norms in Malawi, ii) financial benefits for the Malawian partner, iii) issues related to human resources, iv) increased access to materials and equipment, v) transience of relationships and vi) reputation and prestige.

**Section 7.4** looks at how knowledge sharing, types of trust and power relations influence the way relationships are negotiated between the HCOs and the people directly involved in the implementing the development projects in which IVS is incorporated: the volunteers' co-workers and counterparts in partner organisations, and representatives of the beneficiary groups. It argues that lack of an HCO's responsiveness to contextual changes in the host-countries and the needs of the intended beneficiaries, and persistence in promoting the interests of the volunteer-sending countries in IVS policy and practice, constrain the relationships between the HCOs and their implementing partners. This diminishes institutional trust in IVS and characteristic-based trust 'by-

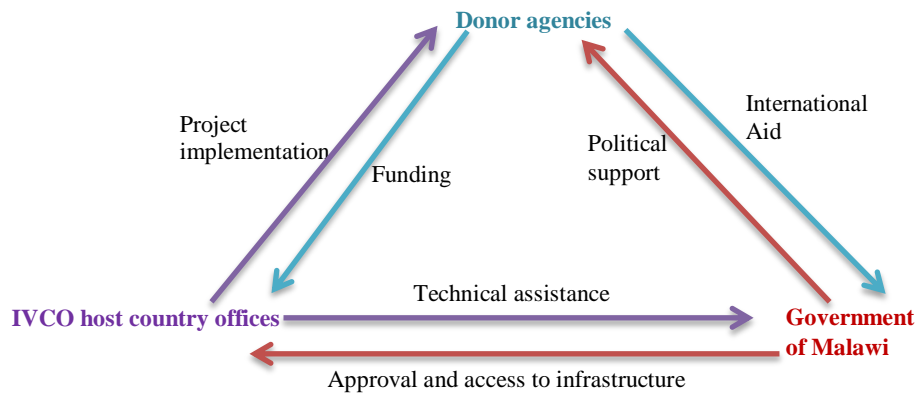
proxy’ of HCOs, sometimes reinforcing internalised inequalities associated with historical or economic supremacy and adversely impacting on knowledge exchange.

**Section 7.5** concludes by reflecting on a summary of the discussion in this chapter.

## **7.2 Negotiating relationships with the strategic partners**

This section examines the relationships between the HCOs and their strategic partners: the donor agencies and the Government of Malawi, drawing attention to the interdependence between them. It argues the multiplicity of strategic partners means that an HCO is not only accountable to the IVCO head office, but also other powerful stakeholders, namely the donor agencies and the host country public institutions. This blurs the distinctions between not only what is being accounted for, but to whom it should be accounted for. This has an impact on knowledge sharing, the types of trust and power relations in the relationships between the strategic partners as each try to minimise risk within the relationship and advance their interests.

Being subordinate to donor power over resources and the Government of Malawi’s power over policies and structures of the national institutions constrains the way HCOs negotiate their relationships with their strategic partners. However, HCOs occupy a preferred position as agents of development by both donors and national institutions, based on institutional trust in their status as value-based organisations, and characteristic-based trust ‘by proxy’ as a result of their associations with established international development agencies - the IVCOs. Furthermore, their role as facilitators of IVS, as an instrument of development intervention, affords HCOs power over a necessary technical resource – the knowledge and expertise of foreign volunteers. Consequently, there is a high level of interdependence between the HCOs and their strategic partners, as depicted in Figure 7.



**Figure 7:** Interdependence between the Government of Malawi, the international donors and IVCO host country offices  
(Source: author)

Figure 7 shows, firstly, how the Government of Malawi is dependent on both the flow of funds from international donor agencies and IVS as one of the available channels for technical assistance (MW1, HCO1, 4). Secondly, the international donor agencies need to maintain a working alliance with Malawi's public sector institutions to help deliver Malawi's long term development plans (IMF, 2017; The World Bank, 2017) while relying on INGOs and HCOs for project implementation (Government of Malawi, 2017, pp. 38–9). Finally, HCOs are connected to donor agencies through their reliance on funding for projects as well as approval and cooperation of the state institutions in Malawi to deliver technical assistance through IVS.

In Malawi, the "Cashgate" scandal in 2013 (Chapter 4, section 4.5) led to the international donors freezing direct budgetary support to the Government of Malawi and re-directing funding for aid through non-governmental organisations (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). One interviewee described the impact on the relationships between the key stakeholders:

*"What has changed [in the working relations between the government workers and the donors] is the funding mechanism, the level of motivation and the level of trust [in] the working relations [between] the government workers [and] the donor."* (HCO 3)

The dilemma faced by the international donors in Malawi lies at the heart of their mandate for development: to support capacity building within public sector structures in Malawi in ways that would address the needs and rights of its people. The challenge presented, then, is how to achieve

this aim in light of past experiences which have proven their most important partner, the Government of Malawi, to be unreliable and untrustworthy.

*“[This] is a disaster because we came here to build the capacity of government....[but] we are not strengthening the government counterparts as much as we should” (HCO 3)*

Furthermore, low levels of trust were also associated with wider political, structural and capacity issues within Malawi’s public institutions that constrained the delivery of the agreed development objectives, leading to a decline in trust of the donors and international agencies in the Government of Malawi’s ability and capacity to steer both development policy and practice. This was widely acknowledged by the majority of senior HCO staff (HCO 3, 4, 5, 10), consultants (PTNR 1, 8) and some volunteers who were placed in government institutions (VOL2, 7):

*“The way that the state operates, it’s difficult to see where we’re going.... Everything’s quite a lot of reacting to situations rather than strategic planning and trying to work towards a plan.” (HCO 4)*

*“The problem is....due to the not-yet-honest structure or missing structure in the Ministry X; they cannot tell me with who can I work with.” (HCO 1)*

The change in donor strategy to redirect funding away from the Government of Malawi to international aid agencies reflects the donors’ power over financial resources but also the power to influence partnership choices for programme implementation. There are, nevertheless, limitations on the extent to which international donors and HCOs can operate in a sovereign state. In Malawi, the power of the international development community over development interventions extends only to its reach within the prevailing Malawian laws and formal structures:

*“If you had a blank piece of paper....you wouldn’t set up the ministry for example, in the way it’s set up today.....but it’s not ours; it’s Malawi. So we have to work within what we have.....We have no legal right to be here at all....We can’t argue with anybody.” (HCO 4)*

HCOs are often forced to find creative means to increase their power to influence within the relationships with the government ministries through formal and informal activities that help build

process-based trust and facilitate working relationships that help maintain IVCOs' effective presence:

*"We work with the government and say: "For this your plan [sic], this is how we are going to help you achieve." (HQ 5)*

*"I have a very strong relationship within the ministry.....Good relationships give me a good appreciation and understanding of how things are going in terms of basic questions [that] we have." (HCO 4)*

However, the change in donors' strategy for fund disbursement has led to HCOs having increased power over resources, straining the relationships between the ministries, the donor agencies, and INGOs working in Malawi, including HCOs. These tensions are associated with uncertainties, and potential conflict of priorities between the different 'worlds' (Chapter 2, section 2.6) of the donors, the Malawian government and HCOs as each tend to function through very different sets of rules. Lewis (2014, p. 146) observes that organisational problems emerge in the areas of ambiguity in the boundary between the different 'worlds', leading to confused roles and identities. The two contrasting quotations below, first from a senior staff member of a Malawian public institution and the second from a senior HCO staff member, illustrate their contradictory perspectives:

*"Here, we don't allow the NGOs to just work on its own [sic]; they use our structures." (MW 1)*

*"There have been cases whereby some international NGOs go down to the ground [sic] and start implementing [projects] on their own." (HCO 10)*

The contradiction in the above statements show that Malawian public institutions may have power over the formulation of rules, regulations and procedures, but weak infrastructures and capacity shortfalls mean that they do not always have the power to enforce those rules. Thus the increased power associated with HCOs' access to international resources was being perceived as suspicious and a potential political threat in some government departments:

*"[The government] are looking at the INGO-Forum as a parallel structure to CONGOMA, the Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi. If we meet as the people from*

*the International NGOs-Forum, these guys from CONGOMA and the government, they're full of: "What are these guys discussing? Are they may be planning to overthrow the government, or what?" (HCO 10)*

The redirection of funding disbursement by donor agencies from Malawian government to HCOs signifies a combination of institutional and characteristic-based trust on the part of the donors in NGOs and INGOs as value-based organisations (Korten, 1990; Brett, 1993; Lewis, 2002). Positive responses to the donors' strategy for fund disbursement were widely evidenced among the staff of all five HCOs as well as their mobilising and implementing partners including other INGOs, Malawian NGOs, beneficiary groups and even volunteers' co-workers and counterparts. Two examples are provided below:

*"When we work with anyone who is not the government we get excellent results.... We see the change in the ideas..... And the attitude is not there; these people are working very well with the beneficiaries and our [Malawian] traditional structures and the district structures." (HCO 3)*

*"The benefits [of working with the INGO/IVS] are that they are actually providing us with support. They already have systems in place that we can borrow.... It's hard for just a local NGO to spring out of nowhere and to be able to access funding or just do operations and accountability to donors, it's very hard." (PTNR 16)*

The donors' trust in HCOs is grounded in reputation (institutional trust) of the parent organisations, their history of work in international development as well as their familiarity with the language of reporting and other management and administrative procedures that constitute donor imperative for professionalism and accountability (Chapter 2, section 2.3):

*"Sometimes the donors will simply come to us to say okay we have this money for this." (HCO 8)*

*"We ensure that the organisations that we enter into a partnership with are registered in Malawi [and that] they have got all the... financial policies and the human resource manuals and the like.... because no donor will risk to put his or her money into a pot which is not organised." (HCO 10)*



The rationale for the trust donors place on HCOs can be described as a form of institutional trust ‘by proxy’ which reflects the HCO’s association with the IVCO. This institutional trust ‘by proxy’ implies assumptions by donors that HCOs have the power to implement projects because, as subsidiaries of IVCOs, HCOs are ‘trusted’ to have the required contextual knowledge, administrative tools and processes, management skills and organisational capacity to deliver the agreed programme objectives. However, Chapter 6 showed that HCOs are not mechanical extensions of their head offices and declared policies of development agencies might not necessarily characterise the views of those tasked with their implementation (Uzzi, 1997; Cornwall and Brock, 2005). Historical and current organisational strategies, structures, policies and procedures can lead to conditions that constrain the HCO’s ability to carry out its day to day functions and have consequences for IVS on the ground.

Achieving transparency in complex donor imperatives for financial reporting - particularly when a single project may involve several donors with diverse programme schedules and technical specifications, is problematic for HCOs (Charlton et al., 1995; Igoe and Kelsall, 2005; Lewis, 2014). Given donors’ growing demand for time-bound and evidence-based indicators for programme achievement (Chapter 2, sections 2.3 and 2.4), information exchange between the HCO and the strategic stakeholders becomes a critical element in generating process-based trust (Butler, 1999, p. 231) in the duration of the programme. For development-focused HCOs creating and maintaining process-based trust, from its basis in institutional trust, is grounded in the strategic nature of their approach to projects and partnerships and how they share information. The participant below from IVCO 2 illustrates:

*“Malawian government would be our main partner in all our projects. We ask of course for relevant at planning material...which covers a period of 4 years and it is designed to achieve various SDG’s<sup>35</sup>. There are also other very prominent players in the country like*

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<sup>35</sup>The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals and are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity (UNDP, 2019)

*DFID...Norway, Canadian Aid... that we are working [with], based on the parastatal relations [and] ... to avoid fragmentation of the sector you are working in.” (HCO1)*

The above statement shows the importance of continuity in the HCOs relationships with key strategic partners, clarity of roles and objectives and, crucially, includes a length of time (4 years) that can potentially facilitate cooperation through repetition of expectations being met over time - process-based trust.

*“In 2012, I found the project at the beginning of its second phase...after each phase or before each phase ends, we have a project evaluation where we decide whether the project was from the SWOT analysis and [decide the] areas which worked or ...we may have to amend...or we will need to include.”*

In contrast, the fragmented approach to IVS to be included in disparate projects makes it difficult for placement-focused HCOs to build process-based trust and makes them over-reliant on institutional and characteristic-based types of trust. In the absence of first-hand knowledge or experience, institutional trust is founded on presumptions of the HCOs’ ability and capacity to deliver the contractual terms of the agreement and is based on the established reputation of the HCOs’ parent organisations:

*“Volunteering has become our identity; people know us because we have these specialists.” (HCO 5)*

*“From a partner’s perspective, everyone wants to work with us; which is really amazing!” (HQ 6)*

However, this exposes placement-focused HCOs to potential weaknesses if the assumptions on which donor trust are based are incorrect (Chapter 6, sections 6.2 and 6.3). When caught in the dilemma of maintaining the trust of donors to implement projects without having the necessary physical or human resources or capacity to do so, HCOs have to minimise the risk of loss of the donors’ trust, on which their organisational survival depends. In doing so, the HCOs’ staff sometimes engage in behaviours and tactics, such as under-reporting of operational weaknesses and unintended or negative outcomes, that bring into question the accuracy, integrity, and utility of shared information. The interview excerpts below exemplify:

*“[The] Country Manager asked [the volunteer] ‘How did you develop that report?’ [The volunteer said]: ‘I submitted the report to you. You were supposed to read it and then change the things which you thought were not supposed to be meant for the donor. I didn’t know that there was [sic] other things that were happening behind the scenes.’” (HCO 10)*

*“When I looked at the budget from the donors, they had budgeted for two persons for Lilongwe... But [since] I arrived no-one [at the HCO] is talking about two.... [I] did ask but they said no, it was like maybe a mistake.” (VOL 12)*

The statements above find congruence with Nauta’s (2006, p. 68) observation that HCOs “strategically translate” the needs of the different stakeholders in a way that allows them “to control the messages that are relayed from “grassroots” to the stakeholders” and, in turn, can adversely affect the outcomes of a project and undermine the contribution of IVS.

Another hazard associated with characteristic-based trust placed on the HCOs by their strategic stakeholders is that representations of ‘characteristic’ can be manipulated. For example, reputations can be constructed or enhanced into brands which underpin the expectations associated with the character through the use of language and multi-media marketing techniques, rather than corroborated data. One participant from IVCO3 head office described the IVCO’s strategy for brand improvement:

*“My focus is on.... the new ways of working which have more results for us...how do we use the information to then build up our brand, build up our influencing power with governments, with the public sectors, with the private sector.” (HQ 3)*

The combination of institutional and characteristic-based types of trust tips the balance of power to influence the aims and processes of IVS in favour of the international donors and HCOs, but undermines the role and contribution of the Malawian partners (MW 1, 5, CPRT 4, 3, 5, PTNR 1, 3):

*“[The HCOs] come and say ‘We have this work to support you... are there any skills gaps?’ ... But in many cases, we find that the money-is-fixed syndrome takes precedence in the sense that [HCOs] say ‘As long as the money is coming from this direction we have to*

*decide who to bring to you”...So, in the end, we find that the negotiation is tilted towards the supplier and not the demand.” (MW1)*

Although empirical data reveal weaknesses in practice and implementation of IVS, they do not appear to impact on the level of trust in placement-focused HCOs, in the eyes of the donors, for example, they sometimes choose to overlook the investigative mechanisms that support project proposals on the assumption that the process has been undertaken.

*“[Sometimes] we do not include [participatory processes at community level] in the [project] proposals. Donors are very prescriptive; they say “We won't go down to that level.... just follow through on the format you have been given.””(HCO 5)*

The above statement makes it clear that donors’ control of funding affords them the power to influence the aims and processes of IVS. Lewis (2014, p. 97) notes that donors’ preference is for rapid results rather than long term goals, to show their constituencies back home, leading to the view that the value of NGOs to donors may be limited to “a cheap way of getting things done”. It could, therefore, be argued that although donor power may look like over-reliance on institutional and characteristic-based trust, it also reflects a disparity in the donors’ focus between reaching an operational goal within a project cycle (Chapter 1, section 1.4) and achieving the strategic goal of social change through development intervention. This concurs with Gulrajani’s (2014, p. 90) suggestion that evaluating donor performance using information based only on the mechanics of aid delivery, undermines the more important questions of donor effectiveness. The participant below illustrates:

*“One of the donors was trying to give the money to the districts to go out to tender [for the construction], not knowing what capacity there was to do that... It was basically an accounting trick on their side because they can say they spent the money and report it to [their] donors.... They were saying you have to be assessing the capacity and training them. We don't have the capacity to do that...that would be a project on its own because we'd have to recruit several other people.” (VOL 16).*

The global trend away from unrestricted to project-based funding (Chapter 2, section 2.3) has impacted on the relationships between NGOs, including HCOs, and their development stakeholders

across the globe. Continually shifting priorities in pursuit of the next funding opportunity, often before one or more projects cycles (Chapter 1, section 1.4) have been completed, work against longer-term relationship building (Lewis, 2009) and contradict the ultimate aims of the development interventions:

*“In the other projects, we jumped out....I don’t think it was enough time for [the beneficiaries] to sustain it....We have proceeded to extend [this project], but still, we haven’t realised some of the impacts at the local level; even [if] we extend [this project], what about the other two that we left out?” (VOL 9)*

The findings point to possible inaccuracies with regards to the information shared by HCOs with other stakeholders, and hence concur with van Eekelen et al.’s (2012, pp. 16–17) independent report of an IVCO’s operations at host country level that revealed inconsistencies between documented and raw data, incorrect attribution of achievements, unsubstantiated statistics and “heroic assumptions”. As with the relationship with the IVCO head offices, if formally documented or informally agreed reports are not verified, contested or acted upon, both types of trust become devalued as they merely come to represent a façade of professionalism. The implications are that the processes and outcomes of IVS in a development programme are overlooked, or not correctly supervised and are potentially contradictory to the original aims.

To conclude this section, then, being reliant on funding and resources from international donors on the one hand and the structures within the public institutions of Malawi on the other to deliver their mandates, HCOs need to exercise a high degree of flexibility and creativity in how they negotiate relationships, depending on who they are negotiating with and what the agenda might be. This implies that while control of resources may yield power over the spending or use of the resources, it does not transform into power to achieve the intended developmental goals in Malawi.

Consequently, far from creating a clear division of power between the HCOs, the Government of Malawi and the donors, it has increased the ambiguities of roles and priorities that lead to suspicions and erosion of trust among the actors. The fallout of these uncertainties has an impact on the formal and informal relationships, hence the day to day functions of project mobilisation and

implementation, in ways that can undermine the intended contribution of IVS to development projects.

### **7.3 Negotiating relationships with mobilising partners**

Re-direction of funding disbursement from donor agencies through INGOs and HCOs, rather than Malawian public institutions has led to the proliferation of contracts and sub-contracts, whether formally documented or informally through verbal agreements. Development agencies, HCOs, consultant practitioners, Malawian contractors, and other foreign and national actors compete for access funds and resources necessary for their development projects and organisational survival (see Figure 3, Chapter 1). *“Malawi is awash with foreign aid”* (VOL7) is how a participant volunteer described the arena of development in Malawi.

The multiplication of international and national development organisations has had an impact on all the HCOs in this research. Whereas the numbers of their main partners in the past had been limited to the Government of Malawi and possibly a small number of other agencies, they now find themselves contracted to, or sub-contracting, a variety of other agencies in the delivery of development programmes:

*“Now we are bringing in non-governmental agents....They are standing in for whatever gaps we are experiencing at the district councils...we also have a way of transferring resources to them and then it's them that implement it.”* (HCO 3)

Li (2005) observes that competition weakens trust. ‘Competing for funding’ (HCO 10 above) leaves little opportunity for the generation of process-based trust between HCOs, the donors and even target beneficiaries. This is particularly pertinent when there is little shared history between the parties and information sharing has to be taken at face value to meet the time limitations of projects. The growing number of actors in IVS presents HCOs with challenges in reconciling the demands arising from the policies and procedures of multiple mobilising stakeholders with the tasks of programme implementation.

*“Now it’s stiffer competition for the same resources...[Our] current partnership agreement is running up to 2016, and then we will have to compete again, so we are not sure whether we will still be on the list or not.” (HCO 10)*

*“We’re working towards a standard...[building] design, because each donor wants their own thing at the moment which doesn’t work. How are you supposed to get them all authorised through local authorities...and [keep up with] updating the drawings?” (VOL 16)*

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising to find duplications, and omissions of projects as numerous national, international, public and private sector and non-profit actors vie for funding and project approval in relatively few key developmental sectors. Overlaps and omissions in development activities permeate all levels of development intervention from institutional and policy levels, to project identification and subsequent implementation through beneficiary groups, thus inhibiting meaningful knowledge sharing:

*“The data is getting confused now because from these small, misaligned implementing partners, can we really collect enough data that can be used for proper planning? No!” (HCO 3)*

*“The challenge of the District Council is that there are a ton of interventions by different NGOs, foreign agencies, and they don’t really align generally...Also so many committees at national level...that the information flow is [very poor] ..... NGOs don’t really know whether someone else [is doing the same thing].” (VOL 2)*

Participants reveal that pockets of initiatives have been set up by various actors by way of organised meetings, fora and other collaborative opportunities (HCO 1, 3, 5, 10) to share information, reduce duplications, and identify possible gaps in knowledge:

*“All the developing partners are experiencing this in one way or the other. So we meet we say...: ‘As development partners, we should be looking at a, b, c, d.’ ....How we give aid and aid effectiveness will have to be reviewed. So it is a learning time as well as a reporting time. It will not go to waste.” (HCO 3)*

The INGO-Forum mentioned in the previous section is one example of collaborative action among mobilising stakeholders; another involved using an international volunteer in an IVS placement to support a District Council in producing a map of development activities in the district, showing gaps and overlaps between projects undertaken by different INGOs and NGOs. Interview statements were corroborated by observing the presence of charts, maps, diagrams and lists of activities against the names of actors on office desks, boards and walls as well as in minutes of meetings, official reports and strategy documents of the participants.

However, despite the rhetoric of collaboration and coordination, it was widely acknowledged by participants that, in practice, the levels of information exchange could be unreliable as actors pursue diverse agendas. One example is given below:

*“We have partners ... [with whom we might] get into a kind of team agreement. Sometimes rules are broken.....so you run the risk of some partners doing what they are not supposed to be doing in the partnership.” (HCO 5)*

Trust is viewed as a form of the gamble taken on the behaviour of another, with the expectation of reducing the potentially damaging effects of risk (Luhmann, 1979; Diallo and Thuillier, 2005; Li, 2005). The above example points to a degree of acceptance of risk between the HCO in their relationships with some partner organisations (Koeszegi, 2004, p. 644). McEvily et al. (2003, p. 99) posit that judgement calls are made in response to gaps in knowledge about an actor that prohibit the generation of trust and constrain rational decision-making based on the information. Thus, in negotiating their relationships with mobilising partners, HCOs sometimes have to make decisions based on judgements that are risky and can increase uncertainties in the relationships. However, the level of risk in the relationship between the HCO and the partner organisation is crucially important to HCOs, particularly when it is a matter of organisational survival, more specifically in the case of placement-focused IVCOs.



The role of IVS in development programmes is acknowledged as one of many tools available for the managing of development projects, so its inclusion in development projects cannot be assumed; it has to be justified and negotiated with mobilising partners for whom IVS may not be a priority:

*“[Sometimes] you have an agenda and [the Malawian partners] haven’t bought into that agenda. It’s a challenge [balancing] the demand for a volunteer to address a [partner’s need], with the specific objective that [IVCO] has and wants to achieve.” (HCO 8)*

Recognition of the “*risk of some partners doing what they are not supposed to be doing in the partnership*” by participants HCO 5 above, illustrates the challenges that HCOs face in balancing the risks in their relationships with some partners with the expectations of the volunteers regarding their placement.

*“[Malawian] partner organisations can sometimes say yes to having a volunteer because they think if they say no, then we won’t go back to them and we might think they don’t want to cooperate. So the volunteer comes and then they have nothing to do. They get frustrated, and sometimes they leave, or they complain to the office.” (HCO 9)*

As shown in Chapter 5, when the realities on the ground fail to meet the expectations of volunteers, it impacts on the dynamics of trust and power relations between them and the HCOs, leading to volunteers’ demotivation, poor performance or departure.

The justification for an IVS placement, centres on whether assistance through IVS is requested by the partner organisation or offered by the HCO (HCO1, 5, 8, 9, 10). When IVS is requested by an organisation for a specific need, it conforms to demand-driven and development focused approach to IVS, and the partner organisation is willing to subsidise, or buy into, the IVS agenda. However, different partner attitudes emerge when IVS is offered to partner organisations, rather than requested by them, taking the form of supply-driven and placement-focused collaboration. However, although there is a clear division between development-focused HCOs responding to requests from partners and placement-focused HCOs offering IVS, there were a small number of overlaps that are included in the examples below from senior HCO staff, first from IVCO3 followed by another from IVCO2:

*“When [a Malawian] partner has a need [for a] skill but cannot afford it, we give them that skill [and] they manage that... But when you say: ... “Would you like to work with us?” They will say: “Yes!” .... [But then] they don’t care whether the volunteer is there, [as if to say] “I didn’t ask for that.”” (HCO 8)*

*“[The volunteers] are paid by us [but they should be] subsidised by our [Malawian] partners...The local employers say... “Even if we know, there is a contribution...we don’t want to subsidise.”” (HCO 1)*

The above statements show that while HCOs aim to promote IVS as a component of development projects, Malawian partners sometimes consent to the power of the HCO over resources even though they have not bought into the agenda for reasons that are different from the aims of IVS and can impact its course and outcomes. This implies a lack of transparency in the disclosure of the needs, and expectations of outcomes of IVS by the participants, which may be either deliberate or unintentional. Six possible reasons for Malawian partners’ consent to IVS have been identified from the data: i) cultural norms in Malawi, ii) financial benefits for the Malawian partner, iii) issues related to human resources, iv) increased access to materials and equipment, v) transience of relationships and vi) reputation and prestige.

### **7.3.1 Cultural norms in Malawi:**

When negotiating the terms and conditions of IVS placements, some Malawian partners’ consent is in deference to the HCOs and grounded in domestic cultural and social norms, as described by a consultant working in a Malawian public institution:

*“Sometimes people give in too easily because it is nice. I say people in Malawi can’t say no,....[they are] always trying to see what will accommodate [sic].” (PTNR 8)*

Deference without prior experience of collaboration implies their trust in the HCO is either institutional through the network of international development agencies, or characteristic-based, for example by association with of the reputation of the IVCO, or both. Institutional-based or characteristic-based trust may also represent an internalized history of oppression, possibly traceable back to colonial rule or even earlier history of the slave trade in Malawi. Internalised deference to power pervades at different levels of Malawian society and is encountered by foreign

HCO staff and volunteers. The examples below, first from an HCO staff member, followed by a Malawian counterpart to a volunteer illustrate:

*“If you look back at the history of Malawi, looking at how the whole population of Malawi lives in such a suppressive state, you cannot expect from [someone] whose position is [within] the structure....[to] raise her voice ...This is a very suppressive environment.”*  
(HCO 1)

*“Some of us, we are down in the management system structure; we are not able to know exactly what [the volunteer] is here for. But I’m sure our senior bosses knew exactly what he was here for because... those are the bosses...the leaders of all these things; they are the ones that maybe can influence... I don’t have confidence [that they would listen to me].”* (CPRT 6)

This suggests that the characteristic deference to the power of a more dominant form opens the opportunity for Malawians to be manipulated into consent by other actors, including the HCOs.

*“[For] the [volunteer placement]...we have to shape the type of our work. So you say: “Why you don’t need [sic] somebody who has skills in 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5?” And they say: “Yeah [that] would be OK.””* (HCO 1)

The behaviour of the HCOs in response to cultural or historical issues in Malawi might be manipulative, but this is not to suggest that HCOs are not always acting in the interest of the partner organisations. On the contrary, often their actions are founded in their past experience and knowledge of the limitations of the partner organisations, which are then aimed at trust generation and empowerment of the partners in the longer term:

*“Some of the (partner organisations) usually are forthcoming, especially when you say: “What you are doing is really good, and for you to really have more donors funding, you need to be registered.””* (HCO 10)

*“I will say: “I feel that Malawi would be well off if we look at [a particular] area” and I would [make recommendations] in line with the Ministry.”* (HCO 1)

Nevertheless, there are also occasions when HCOs misuse their power over the IVS process to make ‘offers’ to partner organisations for less transparent reasons as the consultant working for a Malawian institution could not fail to witness:

*“[One volunteer’s] contract expires in September and....she wants to extend her contract [for personal reasons] so now [the HCO] are pushing [the institution] to ask for a volunteer; so they are creating a job for her to stay right here.” (PTNR 1)*

### **7.3.2 Financial considerations:**

Another easily recognisable incentive for mobilising partners to agree to an IVS placement is related to financial considerations associated with IVS:

*“International volunteers are advantageous because normally they have a bit of funding behind them.” (PTNR 8)*

*“The Programme Officer will say... “If you were to recruit professionals and consultants, half of your budget will go to just pay them. But....volunteers will be a quarter of your costs [and] you’ll get the same return on your investment in terms of quality and even the speed of delivery.””(HQ 5)*

Or, the partner also recognises IVS as ‘a cheap way of getting things done’ (Lewis, 2014, p 97):

*“[Local government is not interested in subsidising volunteers]...It should be their institution which should approach us...[because there are] structural deficits in...these institutions...[but]it’s always the argument: “Let’s look for the cheapest option.” which is sad.” (HCO 1)*

Moreover, senior staff of at least three HCOs (IVCO1, 2 and 3) described the challenges that they face in negotiating relationships with partners where the prior experience of financial irregularities and structural and capacity issues in the partner organisation have constrained the relationship between the HCO and the partner:

*“There are cases whereby organisations do double-funding...when [a Malawian partner] organisation got funding from another donor, and then you’ve also provided funding, not knowing that we are funding the same activity.” (HCO 10)*

Negative experiences, of the type shown in the above examples, lead to mistrust of the partner by the HCOs and drives them to tighten their power over the partner's finance administration which, in turn, can be interpreted as a threat by the other party. In response to the perceived threat, the partner organisations sometimes attempt to re-establish their power by defaulting on contractual agreements in ways that can have an adverse effect on IVS:

*“There are lots of fraud and corruption in most of the [Malawian] partner organisations...Sometimes [the partner] will say: “Yeah, yeah, bring a volunteer!” But then they will realise that “Oh! This guy has cottoned on too much!” and they...say: “We don’t want the volunteer.” Then the volunteer just gets frustrated, and that becomes a problem also.” (HCO 8)*

### **7.3.3 Human resources:**

Mobilising partners may sometimes agree to IVS because they see it as an opportunity to fill gaps in their employee numbers or skills which might be different from the agreed and contracted placement criteria, or they may not be entirely clear in the type of skills or experiences that they need as the next two examples illustrate:

*“The volunteer is there specifically to build the capacity of the [Malawian] partners... But where they don’t have enough staff or capacity in the partner’s [organisation], then the volunteer is left with no option but also to deliver [service as a member of the ] partner’s staff.” (HCO 5)*

*“Sometimes, you have to be careful with what the partner says they want and what is needed. In one of the Health programmes, there was an element of agriculture-related to nutrition. If we hadn’t looked carefully, we would have brought a health volunteer....It hadn’t been made clear that the skill required was agriculture and not health.” (HCO 9)*

Highly detailed and ambitious development plans for each district formally signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), and volunteer placement descriptions exist and are available, some of which reveal discrepancies between negotiated agreements and the reality on the ground (Chapter 5, sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3). One HCO interviewee acknowledged that sometimes HCO's assessment of a potential partner organisation could be less than adequate at the time of negotiating the terms of IVS:

*“Sometimes we make some assumptions ....We do assessments [for funding proposals], but we may not be thorough [enough] ...we find in the course of the project that [the Malawian] partner still lacks capacity.” (HCO 5)*

#### **7.3.4 Increased access to materials and equipment:**

Another reason for IVS stakeholders’ consent to using IVS in development projects is that it is seen as a gateway to accessing physical and material resources.

*“The country is not very rich, and often they lack some very basic things; not enough stationery, no fuel for the cars... There’s a printer and a laptop but no money to buy the cable so they cannot print.” (VOL 7)*

*“Some [volunteers] will take initiative, collect money from their families and buy things that we need.” (MW 2)*

The resources associated with IVS incentivise Malawian partners of HCOs to accept IVS placements. Access to functional resources allows Malawian partner employees to be more effective in their work. However, at times the restrictions placed on the use of bespoke assets (the power over the resources) by HCOs leads to conflict and frustration at the level of project implementation as it removes, or fails to support, the partner’s priorities:

*“[The volunteers] have also support in terms of their vehicles. We are challenged in terms of transport, but their regulation is that they use the vehicles strictly for their programmes. We may need their transport for slightly different problems, but we cannot do that.” (MW 5)*

It has to be noted that Malawian partner organisations also provided physical resources, usually by way of office space, use of available equipment, or fully or partially subsidised accommodation for volunteers in rural areas. Flexibility in sharing of resources is one of the ways that process-based trust can be generated between volunteers and Malawian partner organisation staff as they develop their working relationship over time. However, the rules that restrict the use of resources reinforce the dominance of the party owning the resource and may serve to undermine the generation of process-based trust with the partner organisation and the HCO who set the rules.

### **7.3.5 Transience of relationships:**

The brevity of interaction time between the different actors in IVS programmes constrains opportunities for generating process-based trust even when there are good intentions to do so. The numbers and diversity of participant responses given below are intended to demonstrate the challenges of retaining continuity in relationships between stakeholders that act as drivers of IVS aims and processes:

*“There is very little planning since officers in the government [in] Malawi frequently have to change their workplace, and they cannot really build a fire [sic].” (VOL 2)*

*“In the last say, seven months, I’ve been to New York, Washington, London, Paris.” (HCO 4)*

*“The foreign volunteers just come for a short time and go back home faster than they came.” (BG 11)*

The above quotes are only a handful of examples of widespread findings within the data and reflect the patterns of mobility among the different IVS actors, from donors and HCO staff to counterparts, consultants and volunteers themselves. They illustrate how the continuous movement of actors limits opportunities for knowledge transfer and trust generation through stability and shared experiences. They also provide a possible explanation for the apparent absence of interest or enthusiasm of some partner organisation for IVS, which may simply be the result of lapses in knowledge and information transfer as a consequence of the frequent movement of individuals or key actors in the relationships within and between HCOs and their diverse IVS stakeholders.

### **7.3.6 Reputation and prestige:**

The association of HCOs with their parent organisation’s reputation and brand is a reason why partners sometimes agree to IVS in a number of the prominent public institutions as well as communities in Malawi. However, the reason for agreeing to IVS appears to have less to do with the operational contributions of IVS than its role as a prestigious achievement in qualifying for partnership with an international organisation, particularly one with a recognised status:

*“I think [the Malawian institution] likes the volunteers because we look good! They can say they have a partnership with [IVCO5].” (VOL 5)*

*“I could see that [although] the community representatives.... didn’t know what I was there to do, they thought that having someone like me there was better than not having someone.” (VOL 18)*

This view supported my observations during fieldwork in respect of some of the choices and locations of offices for volunteers which, in Malawi, are associated with the status of the occupants. In one instance a volunteer had been allocated a spacious and well-equipped office on the same level as the senior management while her (equally qualified) Malawian counter-part had a small, overcrowded office on the lower ground floor (VOL 15). Another volunteer in a different programme and location was assigned an office that had already been promised to a senior employee and caused the latter serious grievance (VOL10). The importance of prestige is unclear but may be linked to an actual or perceived increase in ‘power to influence’ institutional hierarchies by way of association with another powerful partner. Including IVS in development programmes based on prestige may be perceived as advancing the power of the IVS recipient organisation to qualify for further international support, or support the mandate of the HCOs in promoting IVS, but its contribution to developmental goals can be questionable, if not negative:

*“We’ve got two [Malawian] faculty members; one of them is PhD prepared from the United States ...and the other one has got her Master’s Degree in the UK, so really highly educated. So [if] you’re bringing a third person to be co-teaching.... a third of lectures, they’re not [going to be] teaching a whole lot.” (VOL 5)*

The section has shown the challenges that HCOs face in managing their relationships with partner organisations with which they need to collaborate to justify the inclusion of IVS as in development projects. Following from the discussion in section 7.2, it was shown that although changes in donor strategy for fund disbursement have produced opportunities for HCOs to access donor funding for IVS placements, they have also created challenges as HCOs find themselves in an increasingly competitive environment with other INGOs and HCOs. This section has argued that the fast-moving and competitive environment of development in Malawi constrains opportunities for



knowledge sharing and shared experiences that can support the generation of process-based trust. Consequently, HCOs' relationships with partner organisation are largely reliant on socially-based expectations of institutional or characteristic-based trust, which may not be accurate or valid (Chapter 5, sub-section 5.3.2). This section has illustrated the risks associated with reliance on institutional or characteristic-based trust by showing six possible reasons for partner organisations to accept an IVS placement without 'buying into the agenda'. This means that HCOs have to adopt strategies, for example, partner assessments, that increase their power to influence their relationships with their diverse partners. However, such strategies rely on the availability of the necessary time and resources to assimilate information on which to make partnership decisions. This exposes HCOs to risks, driving to make judgements that can backfire and have consequences for IVS that can undermine the development aims of projects. This is precisely what the next section examines as it looks at the relationships between the HCOs, the staff of partner organisations and representatives of beneficiary groups and volunteers, who are directly involved in IVS and the implementation of the project on the ground.

#### **7.4 Negotiating relationships with implementing partners**

This section looks at how knowledge sharing, the types of trust and power relations influence the way relationships are negotiated between the HCOs and the people directly involved in the implementing the development projects in which IVS is incorporated: the volunteers' co-workers and counterparts in partner organisations, and representatives of the beneficiary groups. It argues that lack of an HCO's responsiveness to contextual changes in the host-countries and the needs of the intended beneficiaries, and persistence in promoting the interests of the volunteer-sending countries in IVS policy and practice, constrain the relationships between the HCO and their implementing partners. This diminishes institutional trust in IVS and characteristic-based trust 'by-proxy' of the HCO, sometimes reinforcing internalised inequalities associated with historical or economic supremacy and adversely impacting on knowledge exchange.

As with many other developing countries, changes in the institutional infrastructure of Malawi - no matter how gradual - and the increasing number of educated and qualified Malawian professionals have changed the profile of IVS placements from direct service provision to capacity building and technical assistance (Chapter 2, section 2.7). One participant from IVCO4 head office observed:

*“I think that the expectations are that there will always be a demand for...competencies [based on], enthusiasm and commitment. [But] countries have a limited absorption capacity, and...we are trying to promote... [the] ownership capacity of the local institutions. So, one of the challenges ... is having adequate demand for the supply of... volunteers.” (HQ 1)*

The above statement suggests that negotiating IVS placements is based on understanding the local context and supporting and prioritising national candidates subject to availability and suitability of qualifications. Sustainable development involves a change in the distribution of power among the stakeholders, with power shifting away from dominant actors to empower the weak to develop themselves (Edwards and Sen, 2000). In Malawi, the empowerment of qualified nationals is supported by the Government of Malawi’s rationale for the recruitment of international volunteers as *“Not merely meant to fill vacancies, but to build capacity where specialized expertise is needed and only in cases where it is evident that there are no Malawians to occupy such posts”* (Chilabade, 2016, pp.2–3). This is further reinforced, as shown in the following excerpt from a Directive issued by the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRMD), Government of Malawi (2016):

*“[Despite] the approved procedures for recruitment of international volunteers into the Country....it has been observed that some institutions hosting international volunteers’ bypass DHRMD .....Government has with immediate effect directed that it will not approve security clearance for any international volunteer recruited in violation of the approved procedures.” (Chilabade, 2016, pp.2–3)*

However, Malawian public institutions may have the power to influence the formulation of rules, regulations and procedures, but weak infrastructures and capacity shortfalls mean that they do not always have the power over the necessary resources to enforce those rules. This weakness in

Malawian public institutions tips the balance of power in favour of those who match the criteria preferred by international donors and HCOs:

*“Some of the donors will trust a local partner that has a muzungu<sup>36</sup> there; then they will go there [sic].” (HCO 8)*

This presents a challenge for HCOs, as well as other INGOs who recruit international staff and volunteers, in balancing conflicting priorities, namely, to comply with the time-bound terms of agreement for a donor-funded IVS placement, conformance with Malawian state regulations and observing the wider implications of engaging a foreign national to undertake work that a qualified Malawian may be able to do. The challenge of meeting the expectations of qualified nationals for employment is defining what is meant by appropriate qualifications for the role. The example below is from a participant from IVCO2 head office:

*“We wouldn’t send volunteers [when] our analysis would clearly say that its national colleagues that should have those job opportunities....but there is a variety of posts that only volunteers can fill, and they fill successfully.” (HQ 2)*

The difficulty is in differentiating roles that only an outsider can do or how to test that assumption by engaging potentially qualified nationals. Given weaknesses in infrastructure, it is not guaranteed that suitable candidates would necessarily be able to access relevant information.

*“In Malawi, we have so many challenges because of lack of useful information...we don’t know what process [is for applying for jobs]. How do you go about it?” (CPRT 6)*

Moreover, the ambiguities linked to the term ‘volunteer’ (Chapter 2, section 2.7) do not always inspire the most suitable candidates to apply, particularly if vacancies are also aimed at appealing to international volunteers:

*“When we first saw the ad...my friends laughed at it....Who volunteers?!.... [People with my qualification] make their own money out there,...have a laptop [and] a car, that kind of thing.” (VOL 17)*

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<sup>36</sup>The term *mzungu* (or plural *wazungu*) is used in reference to multinational expatriates as well as the white postcolonial community residing in some African countries (Lough and Carter-Black, 2015, p. 213), including Malawi.

Almost all participants, from HCO office staff, counterparts to volunteers, and even the volunteers agreed that most of the criteria could equally have been met, and sometimes more favourably so, if there had been another qualified Malawian instead of a foreigner (PTNR 6, CPRT 1, 3, 4, 8, 6, BG 1, 2, HCO 8, 9, 10, VOL 7, 8, 10, 17):

*“Unfortunately most of the work that the volunteers do, there are local people that could do..... There are lots of them out there.” (HCO 8)*

*“I’m sure if you’d advertise this job, not as a volunteer but as a job.... online today, you’d get in your email one hundred applications before the end of the day.” (VOL 17)*

The response from Malawian professionals (including some of the HCO’s staff) to the ways in which HCOs’ promote IVS, is one of consent. Participants recognise that although HCOs have power over the use of donor funding for capacity building in Malawi, a supply-driven approach means that HCOs are often seen as promoting IVS to supporting qualified nationals. This is in line with the role of HCOs as boundary managers that straddle several social worlds and are accountable to them all. Mowles (2012, pp. 5–6) suggests that faced with conflicting priorities of meeting donor demands (and head offices’ expectations) for professionalization and attending to the relationship with beneficiaries and partners, “it is often the latter which suffers”, as illustrated by the following two participants:

*“It is possible that for some roles, the expertise can be found in Malawi, but at the moment, the priority for [IVCO3] is international volunteers.” (HCO 9)*

The practice of IVS sometimes contradicts the espoused principles of IVCOs concerning prioritising qualified nationals and suggests a process that does not recognise or include qualified Malawians as stakeholders. There is prevalent belief across the full range of participants that the roles undertaken by foreign volunteers can be carried out by qualified Malawians (PTNR 6, CPRT 1, 3, 4, 8, 6, BG 1, 2, HCO 8, 9, 10, VOL 7, 8, 10, 17), and the scale of participant responses that acknowledged the availability of qualified Malawian show that the issue is not confined to either development-focused or placement-focused HCOs. It suggests that insufficient effort is being made

by donors, as well as HCOs, to provide mechanisms for identifying and supporting qualified Malawians in roles that are then occupied by international volunteers. Instead, they use their power to influence the promotion of IVS based on a combination of institutional and characteristic-based trust of the IVCOs, which is applied to their HCOs ‘by proxy’ (section 7.2 of this chapter), as the two participants below illustrate:

*“We usually have applications from Malawians... But [for example], one....[international donor agency] indicated in the proposal that we need an international person.” (HCO 10)*

*“I’ve always advocated for capacity to be located from within the country. I believe we do have those capacities in Malawi and we can get them... But [HCO] has been leaning towards having more of an international person.... At the end of the day, it was decided by [the donor and the HCO] to bring an international person.” (PTNR 3)*

The statements above show the challenges of having to balance multiple mandates, which can sometimes be perceived as advancing their organisational interests rather than the broader aims of development. The above statements correspond with the common criticism of NGOs that they are excessively focused on upward accountability to donors and authorities such as governments and their own head offices but are less mindful of downwards accountability in their relationships with the target beneficiaries, or the other development actors, colleagues and counterparts (Lewis, 2014, p. 193). The examples above find congruity with Lewis’s (2014, p. 193) observation that real or perceived disparity between upward and downward accountabilities can work against NGOs as “they can be seen as either the instruments of donor or foreign government interests, or the vehicles used by unscrupulous individuals to pursue their self-interested agendas.”

Placing foreign volunteers into roles that qualified nationals can fulfil, contradicts their declared objectives for capacity building in institutional development in Malawi by blocking the opportunities for Malawians to participate in development activities in their own country. It diminishes the institutional trust of Malawian partners and colleagues in the fairness of the international volunteering processes, and the organisations that operate it. Institutional trust is

replaced with characteristic-based trust in ‘outsiders’ that can potentially reinforce internalised inequalities associated with colonialism or Western supremacy:

*“I think when you are from outside, you think that Malawi people are poor and they are even poor in their minds. So if I come, because I am the muzungu, it means I need to teach them. So that’s the challenge: [the volunteers] think you don’t know. They think they are there to educate you; they think they are there to do things in their own way. So that’s the challenge.” (MCPRT 11)*

The participant is expressing anger and resentment in the way IVS can reinforce cultural dominance. Data show widespread conviction among HCO staff and their implanting partners that most of the criteria for IVS placements reflect the variety of available placements which can potentially be translated into job vacancies for qualified nationals. This raises the expectations of qualified Malawians in the powers of HCOs to influence the decision-making processes of IVS in ways that are more favourable to educated Malawians. One participant observed that real or perceived inequality of power between the volunteers and their co-workers that was being used to justify IVS placements was related not to differences in technical proficiency, but the educated Malawians’ lack of exposure to professional experiences outside Malawi which call for a more reciprocal approach to international volunteering:

*“We only see [international volunteers] coming here. Are there no any chances that Malawians can go and volunteer there?....Sometimes people make decisions because they....don’t know what really happens in the developed countries, so their vision isn’t very far [sic]. So one way of helping the development of this country is to let people from this country get exposure to what really happens out there. When they come back, their decisions would be improved.” (MCPRT 4)*

This is not to say, however, that there aren’t occasions when valid reasons exist for the presence of an outsider, even it is not immediately apparent. Sometimes Malawian partner organisations distrust fellow Malawians and would rather place characteristic-based trust in ‘outsiders’, not only in respect of their technical qualifications for the role but through fear linked to the potential risk of misuse of shared information. The following Malawian HCO staff members explain:

*“We have to deal with government at a certain level. With the position, I am on now....when I see a risk I...forward it to the right desk, so it doesn't stick on me. Because if [I] say the same thing, it will be received in a different way: “Ah, she is attacking us!” But when an international organisation says it, it's constructive criticism.” (HCO 3)*

*“The [Malawian partner] organisations are very tricky.....they'll say: “What can my fellow Malawian tell me?” At least if it's somebody from outside Malawi, they have that level of respect for them.” (HCO 10)*

HCO staff recognise that the costs associated with bringing in foreign volunteers could be better spent if redirected to support the employment of qualified nationals to do the same roles because *“the partner organisations may not have the [financial] capacity.... to pay for those skills”* (HCO 8), but they do not always have the power to influence the candidate selection and recruitment processes:

*“[International volunteers] are expensive. If you look at the budget, probably you will find that a lot of resources went towards the volunteers than the actual implementation.” (HCO 5)*

International volunteers subsidised by IVCOs are a cheaper alternative for public or private sector employers, although the overall costs surpass the requirement for further training and employing qualified nationals. A further inference is that in the absence of a significant gap between the skills and/or knowledge of a volunteer and their colleagues in the partner organisation, an IVS placement can adversely affect the existing employees' ownership of their tasks and responsibilities and counteract the broader aims of capacity-building (HCO 3, 8, 10)

*“The volunteers kind of cover-up for the [partner employees'] inactivity, because...they will be found as underperformers. [The] volunteers are making up for the missing technical officer who has decided to fold their hands [sic].” (HCO 3)*

HCOs are seen as having the ability to mediate between ‘grassroots’ and other stakeholders - such as government policymakers, multi-and bi-lateral institutional donors and other aid agencies, as well as their head offices and the volunteers. HCOs are deemed to be closer to the beneficiaries than donors, governments, aid agencies and IVCO head office, thus more likely to have access to

information that supports the aims of development interventions, allowing them to mediate between knowledge and action (Clark et al., 2016). However, interviews with beneficiary group representatives revealed little or no references to HCOs or their staff, reinforcing that the view that their perspective on IVS is based on their relationships with volunteers rather than HCO staff. In the absence of directly collectable data from beneficiary interviews, it was only possible to make judgements based on observations of behaviours and status of projects, as well as data from other interviewees such as volunteers and their counterparts and co-workers. Based on this analysis, it was possible to link the beneficiaries' perceptions of HCOs to participatory approaches and communication channels that facilitate meaningful information exchange to and from the beneficiaries.

Positive perceptions were linked to the ability of the beneficiaries to receive feedback information and to participate in, and contribute to, the processes of project implementation. In one example, the volunteer shared an office with her counterparts and collaborated on producing project plans which were shared and discussed with the beneficiaries at the beginning of the project, and were followed by frequent reviews and training workshops in which the beneficiaries were able to share experiences. I was able to observe several planning meetings including one where the entire group, including co-workers and volunteers, were able to jointly apply for an extension to the project, facilitated by the development-focused HCO and attended by the donor. Availability of spaces and opportunities for the beneficiaries to exercise power to influence the project facilitated process-based trust generation among the stakeholders, and was evidenced in the positive way the beneficiaries experienced the benefits to their lives.

*“Based on the lessons we get, and the financial benefits... we think in the near future; we shall have something to be proud of.” (BG 4)*

*“There is plenty of goodness. These people [the volunteers] are neither selfish nor partial. They always help us in a lot of agricultural equipment such as seeds, hoes etc. in addition the lesson they provide will always be part of us even after they are gone.” (BG 11)*



In contrast, negative perceptions of placement-focused HCOs were linked to poor communication and lack of participation by the beneficiaries in the processes of project implementation. In one such example, the counterparts and beneficiaries had not been involved in the design process, given a project plan or informed of the arrival of the volunteer. The logistics of the volunteer's role prevented her from living near the project site or visit it more than 2 or three times per year. The counterparts and beneficiary groups had no contact with the HCO and could not form a relationship with the mostly absent volunteer. Consequently, problems during implementation could not be reported or acted upon. At the time of the fieldwork at the site, the project was almost one year behind schedule, physical and logistical aspects of the projects had failed, and lack of communication and training had left many of the co-workers and beneficiaries anxious, confused and uncertain about the future. The inability of the beneficiaries to influence the project processes had not only prevented the construction of process-based trust but resulted in diminished institutional trust of the HCO.

This section has shown that the relationships between the HCOs, the staff of partner organisations and representatives of beneficiary groups, who are directly involved in IVS and the implementation of the project on the ground, is shaped by the way HCOs are seen to respond to contextual changes in the host country and the needs of the intended beneficiaries. It is shown that supporting opportunities for suitably qualified Malawians and engaging beneficiaries in the design and implementation of projects, not only enhances institutional and characteristic-based trust in the HCO among the implementing partners, but it contributes to the broader goals of development. However, HCOs face challenges in balancing the above with donors', as well as IVCOs', organisational mandates that promote the interests of the volunteer-sending countries in IVS policy and practice. Failing to achieve the right balance diminishes institutional trust in IVS and characteristic-based trust 'by-proxy' of HCOs, sometimes reinforcing internalised inequalities associated with historical or economic supremacy and adversely impacting on knowledge exchange.

## 7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the role of HCOs at the boundaries of their relationships with IVS stakeholders at the levels of strategic, mobilising and implementing partnerships. It has shown that contextual factors in the institutional landscape of development in Malawi impact on knowledge transfer, the types of trust and power relations between the HCOs and their strategic, mobilising and implementing partners. Thus influence the HCOs' ability to act as manage the boundaries of their relationships with their partner organisations.

Being tasked with multiple mandates, but also having to mediate between various stakeholders means that HCOs' function parallels that of NGOs within their right, rather than a passive extension of IVCO head offices. This means that HCOs' work situates them 'between a rock and a hard place' (Igoe and Kelsall, 2005, p. 1) because of unequal relationships with their different stakeholders. While HCOs need to have collaborative relationships with the donors for access to funding, and the Government of Malawi for approval to continue their work, they have to do so in a competitive environment with other development agencies. Thus the HCOs become embedded within a network of power and administration, which can distract them from the aims of development through social change (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013, p. 15).

HCOs need to maintain their power over resources and power to influence authority for organisational survival and to protect their interests. To do so, they 'strategically translate' information (Nauta, 2006) between the beneficiary groups and the programme stakeholders (and IVCOs' head office) which can lead to inconsistencies between policy and practice of IVS. These inconsistencies have an effect on the institutional and characteristic-based trust 'by proxy' of the HCOs by people who are directly involved in setting the development programme's long term aims (strategic partners), project design (mobilising partners) and project delivery (implementing partners), none of whom has overall power over the range of resources required to achieve the desired goals of IVS. Moreover, the discrepancies between policy and practice of IVS and its subsequent impact on development projects, do not appear to influence the institutional and

characteristic-based trust 'by proxy' of the HCOs by the donor community. This corresponds with Fowler's (1997, p. 168) observation that donors avoid critical evaluation of organisational conditions or characteristics which might have contributed to project results "as if organisations in the aid chain are not part and parcel of what happens." Thus it supports the focus of this research that the nature and longevity of the challenges in IVS are less likely to be related to value-based principles of volunteering than to the failures of the organisational processes of IVS programmes which are triggered by the way relationships are negotiated between HCOs and the other IVS actors.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Discussion of Findings and Conclusion**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This thesis has argued that different types of trust, power relations and the way knowledge is shared in the negotiation of relationships between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders, influence the course of development through IVS towards its intended aims. The study addresses a gap in the literature of development interventions through IVS. Despite their critical role in the provision of volunteer services (Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2003; IVR, 2004; Sherraden et al., 2006, 2008; Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013), IVCOs are almost invisible in development management literature as an organisational form and “have remained a black box” (Nelson and Child, 2016). Even more conspicuous is the absence of IVCO host country offices in development management, NGO management and volunteer management literature. This study bridges the gap in the literature by drawing from relevant parts of the literature on MNCs and boundary organisations to examine the role and influence of HCOs as a distinct component of development management in steering IVS.

HCOs have to negotiate relationships with a large array of individuals and organisations with diverse interests. Negotiating relationships involves the range of human behaviour of which trust and power are key influential variables that shape the expectations and behaviours of people and organisations (Chapter 3, section 3.2). In turn, types of trust and power relations influence, and are influenced by, factors such as histories of individuals or organisations, differences in culture, and use of language, but most crucially by information exchange and knowledge sharing between stakeholders (Chapter 3, section 3.2.4).

By analysing the roles of trust and power in how relationships are negotiated between HCOs and the IVS stakeholders this research makes theoretical, empirical and policy contributions to the literature on development management and volunteer management through international

volunteering. This chapter presents a discussion of the main empirical and conceptual findings of this study and shows how they contribute to, and move forward, the existing understanding of the role of HCOs in international volunteering.

**Section 8.2** discusses the key findings of Chapters 5 and 6 and 7 across the three fields of inquiry to suggest the overall insights from the study.

**Section 8.3** revisits the theoretical framework that was developed for this research and considers its contribution to, and limitations in, addressing the key research question.

**Section 8.4** sets out the overall conclusion of this research. It establishes the centrality of the role of HCOs as key actors in development through international volunteering and reinforces their status as boundary managers tasked with negotiating relationships with multiple stakeholders to whom they are accountable. The section shows the importance of different types of trust and power relations, and the way knowledge is shared in how these relationships are negotiated by HCOs.

**Section 8.5** presents the contribution of this research to empirical, theoretical knowledge, methodological approach and policy considerations

**Section 8.6** Concludes this thesis by offering recommendations for wider research including a further investigation of the strategic orientation of IVCOs to development; more in-depth study of the role of HCOs and NGOs as boundary managers; further study of the potential moral hazard in the relationship between stakeholders in development interventions, and examining the relationships between host country employees and employed foreign staff in the same administrative unit of the organisation.

## 8.2 Summary of key findings

To find out how relationships are negotiated between IVCO host country offices and the stakeholders in IVS programmes, this study directed its attention toward five IVCO host country offices, using Malawi for the contextual background. This section presents a discussion of the main findings of Chapters 5 and 6 and 7 in each of the three categories of stakeholders that HCOs negotiate relationships with:

- i) The international volunteers
- ii) Their IVCO head offices, and
- iii) The other stakeholders such as partner organisations, government and international funding agencies.

Issues related to conflicts between HCO staff and volunteers have been reported in the literature on IVS for over sixty years (Chapter 2, section 2.2) and remain unresolved to the present day. In exploring possible underlying reasons for these conflicts, chapter 5 argued that the negotiation of the relationship between the HCO staff and the volunteers is influenced by the diversity of perspectives on volunteering, the organisational focus of the IVCO and the contrasting expectations of the professional, personal and administrative support that HCOs can provide for the volunteers.

The proliferation of terminology applied to volunteers, and the growing number of international volunteers of diverse social, cultural and demographic backgrounds with different motivations for volunteering, has created ambiguities in the perceptions and expectations of volunteering. These factors make it problematic for HCOs' staff, and other IVS stakeholders, to 'read' the intentions of the volunteers. This can lead to assumptions based on stereotypes that reinforce historical power inequalities or failed expectations of characteristic-based trust. The combined effects of experiences and accumulation of realised or unrealised expectations build upon existing beliefs and understandings of volunteering among individual actors, creating a number of perspectives of international volunteers that necessitate mediation. It showed that geographical and cultural barriers limit the opportunities for building process-based trust between the HCOs and the volunteers.

Therefore, their relationships are informed by institutional and characteristic-based types of trust and shaped by real or perceived assumptions of unequal power over resources and power to influence. Subsequently, the types of trust and power relations contribute to the way information is exchanged between the HCOs, the volunteers and their co-workers in partner organisations.

Volunteers and their eventual partner organisations rely on HCOs to provide them with the necessary information to allow them to make informed decisions about their commitment to IVS. As boundary managers, HCOs are thus acting as gate-keepers of information (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013) and are able to be selective in sharing information (Ebrahim, 2002). HCOs can strategically control the flow of information to the different stakeholders (Nauta, 2006) – the government, the partner organisation, the volunteers, their head office and the donors – through various channels of communication including partnerships agreements, reports, and job descriptions. Asymmetry of knowledge between HCOs and other stakeholders can backfire if the HCO does not have the necessary power over resources, capacity or clarity of mandate to identify and analyse the factors that contribute to the success of a placement. If the expectations of volunteers are not met on arrival at their placement, it leads to the erosion of institutional and characteristic-based trust, potential conflict between HCO staff and the volunteers, and has a consequence for the IVS and the wider development project. This makes ‘managing’ power relations and generating process-based trust in the HCOs’ relationship with the volunteers during the placement period problematic. During my fieldwork, I found this sometimes led to volunteers’ early departure from an IVS placement or undertaking independent work, which may have serious consequences for all key IVS stakeholders.

Chapter 5 showed that a development-focused approach to IVS emphasises knowledge sharing between the HCO and the partner organisation, and the agreement of long term goals that lead to the targeted recruitment of volunteers with explicit skills that add to the partner organisation’s existing expertise, strengths and opportunities. This approach makes it easier for HCOs to negotiate their relationships with the volunteers since the placement is one of several instruments of technical

assistance that allow the facilitation of local effort rather than imported foreign expertise. It strengthens the institutional trust of the volunteers and their co-workers in the HCO and lays the foundations for building process-based trust, positive relationships and future cooperation. The added value of the IVS placement is thus recognised in a meaningful way since volunteers are an element in the mix of resources aimed at the delivery of the overall goals of the programme.

In contrast, a placement-focused approach creates role conflict and uncertainty of priorities for HCOs in their function as boundary managers, with mandates to act as agents of development while simultaneously facilitating volunteer services as a primary organisational objective. The impact of role conflict on the work of the HCO is evident in the language and content of documents and other forms of shared information which are incomplete and contain ambiguities that lead to tensions in negotiating relationships with volunteers. Examples of underlying causes of poor relationships between HCOs and volunteers were related to the HCOs' perceived lack of professional expertise, resources, and networks to support their volunteers, as well as unrealistic logistics and miscalculation of the context of the IVS placements. Ambiguities open spaces for interpretation and assumptions that may not be correct, but the HCO may not have power over resources (funds, volunteer management skills), or power to influence IVCO policy, to bring about change. This position of the HCOs reflects the dilemma faced by all NGOs in balancing their development mandates with the imperatives for organisational survival and can have a negative impact on the potential for building process-based trust and a cooperative relationship between HCOs' staff and the volunteers. Although the findings in this research point to a sharp divide between development-focused and placement-focused IVCO strategies, the fact that they are based on the study of five IVCOs limits their generalizability. More research would be needed to understand the consistency of the evidence and its implications.

Chapter 6 argued that the distribution of power over resources and power to influence between HCOs and IVCO head offices affects the expectations of trust between these organisational units in ways that can support or constrain information exchange. Drawing on literature about MNCs, this



chapter showed that, unlike the way they are portrayed on IVCO websites, HCOs are not continuous extensions of IVCO head offices. Discrepancies in the way IVCOs' organisational strategies, structures and procedural policies are formulated and communicated influence the internal mechanisms of HCO management and administration, impacting on programme selection, negotiations and decision-making. Low expectations of trust and inability to influence intra-organisational policies and procedures leads to a situation of uncertainty for HCO staff and increases their perception of risk, driving them to protect themselves through behaviours that affect the processes and outcomes of IVS and the development programme in which IVS is incorporated.

The chapter showed that how HCOs negotiate relationships within the IVCO is shaped by the history of the parent organisation, the types of trust and power relations that existed when the IVCO was first set up, and how and why they changed over the years (Chapter 6, section 6.2). The ability of the IVCOs to respond to emerging global trends is related to the types of external and internal information that each considers important, how the information is used and for what purpose (Chapter 6, sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2). The relationships between the HCOs and their head offices were therefore informed by the way each IVCO interpreted external factors into internal policies and procedures. It was shown that development-focused IVCOs' outward-facing perspective (Chapter 6, section 6.2.1) enabled them to develop internal structures, policies and procedures that recognise and support the HCO in mitigating the challenges that they face in their role. In contrast, the placement-focused inward-facing perspective (Chapter 6, section 6.2.2) led to weaknesses in organisational structures, policies and processes that might support information assimilation and knowledge sharing in ways that facilitate organisational responses to growth and change (Chapter 6, section 6.2.2).

Global trends in fund disbursement, donor imperative for professionalism and an evidence-based approach to development, as well as improvements in education, health and infrastructure in developing countries steer IVCOs to reassess their strategies for IVS. Negotiation of relationships between the HCOs and their head offices involves changes to the distribution of power of resources

and power to influence, that in turn, impact on institutional and process-based trust of trust between them. Findings from development-focused IVCOs showed that process-based trust is more likely to develop when in-house formal and informal relationships encourage contributions from staff and volunteers. When conformance to policies and procedures is embedded in the long-term relationships, the continuity of the relationship allows the opportunity for process-based trust to develop at different levels of organisational structure and support knowledge sharing and collaborative behaviours among the staff of both HCO and head office. These include not only fairer remuneration and benefits packages for staff but the transparency of decision making, allocation of the appropriate level of resources, as well as opportunities for professional and personal development of HCOs' staff.

Placement-focused IVCOs in my study struggled to meet the challenges of global trends in professionalization and aid disbursement in development, and the changing context of development in developing countries, both of which presented serious threats to the IVCOs' organisational survival. The lack of preparedness to respond to the changing topography of global development is evident in the day to day operation of the placement-focused HCOs where HCO staff are experiencing role conflict, uncertainty of priorities, inadequate power over resources to be effective in their work, and lack of power to influence intra-organisational policies that could help improve their performance. The consequences are staff frustration, negative attitudes to work, and high levels of staff and volunteer turnover that reflect the loss of institutional and process-based trust in the IVCO.

Challenges in the relationships between HCOs and head offices of all IVCOs are not exclusive to individual IVCOs or even to particular levels within IVCOs internal structures, although they may be less visible, or more skilfully mitigated by some IVCOs than others. A level of acceptance was noted in the staff of placement-focused HCOs, of the weaknesses in organisational structures and processes that are designed to capture and respond to information exchange. However, these weaknesses undervalue the integrity and reciprocity of information being shared and might meet

the expectations of institutional trust but not of process-based trust between the HCO and head office. This resonates with insights from the literature on boundary organisations (Chapter 2, section 2.6) in respect of the purpose of policies or procedures that apply to the production of information that is neither scrutinized for integrity of the content, nor subject to internal accountabilities, thus resembling a ‘moral hazard’ (Guston, 1999, p. 93) in the relationships between the HCO and its head office.

Chapter 6 showed that, as boundary managers, the ability of the HCOs to manage their relationships with their IVS stakeholders’ is as much a product of their relationship with their head office as that of the domestic context in the host country. Enduring policies that are not applied enforced, or reconsidered, diminish in value and efficiency as administrative tools and lead to role uncertainty and conflict of priorities among the HCOs’ staff. When the issues of concern, whether at HCO or head office level, are not addressed satisfactorily, they are likely to remain and possibly be repeated. This may explain why problems that were reported decades ago continue to exist in the present day.

Chapter 7 argued that contextual factors in the institutional landscape of development in Malawi impact on the dynamics of trust and power relations between the HCOs and their partner organisation at a programme’s strategic (donors and the government of Malawi), mobilising (partner organisations and other aid agencies) and implementation levels (communities and beneficiary groups). It showed that HCOs are in interdependent relationships where they have to collaborate with the donors for access to funding, with the Government of Malawi to endorse the continuation of their work, and with local partners and beneficiary groups for project mobilisation and implementation, while simultaneously competing with other development agencies. Thus, as boundary managers, they are forced to operate “between a rock and a hard place” (Igoe and Kelsall, 2005, p. 1) because of the unequal relationships that they have with different actors.

Interdependence underlines the challenges that HCOs face in negotiating relationships with actors when the boundaries of interactions are not only unclear but are unstable. The shift in power distribution as a consequence of the Cashgate scandal (Chapter 4, section 4.5) characterises the shifting nature of the power relations in the interdependent relationships between the HCOs, as boundary managers, the donors and the Government of Malawi. The donors' decision to redirect fund disbursement represented an exercise of their power over resources, as well as the loss of process-based trust and diminished institutional trust in the Government of Malawi. On the other hand, it showed the donors' institutional and characteristic-based trust 'by proxy' in the HCOs (and other NGOs). The removal of this power from the Government increased the power of HCOs over resources but diminished the basis for institutional trust in the HCOs' relationships with state departments and ministries (Chapter 7, section 7.2).

As boundary managers, HCOs face challenges in negotiating relationships because the multiplicity of different stakeholders and the competitive arena of development in Malawi make building process-based trust problematic. Their task is further complicated by the transient nature of development work where people and jobs change several times within the life-cycle of a project. Thus the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders are over-reliant on institutional and characteristic-based types of trust which are founded on assumptions that may not be accurate, or may change (for example as in the consequences of Cashgate), and therefore might not deliver the expectations of these kinds of trust. The donors' trust in HCOs is founded on presumptions of the HCOs' ability and capacity to deliver the contractual terms of the agreement and is based on a combination of institutional and characteristic-based types of trust in the HCOs' parent organisations. However, Chapter 6 showed that HCOs, and in particular, placement-focused HCOs, do not always have the required contextual knowledge, administrative tools and processes, management skills and organisational capacity to deliver the agreed programme objectives. Although empirical data (Chapter 7, section 7.2) reveal weaknesses in practice and implementation of IVS, they do not appear to impact on the level of trust in HCOs in the eyes of the donors. This suggests that although donor power may look like over-reliance on institutional and characteristic-based trust, it also

reflects a disparity in the donors' focus between reaching an operational goal within a project cycle (Chapter 1, section 1.4) and achieving the strategic goal of social change through development intervention. This concurs with Gulrajani's (2014, p. 90) suggestion that evaluating donor performance, using information based only on the mechanics of aid delivery, undermines the more important question of donor effectiveness.

IVS can be requested by a partner organisation when it is demand-driven and development-focused in principle, or offered by the HCO when it is often supply-driven and placement-focused (Chapter 7, section 7.3). The combination of the donors' institutional and characteristic-based trust on HCOs can tip the balance of power over resources and power to influence the aims and processes of IVS in favour of the international donors and HCOs but undermines the role and contribution of the Malawian partners. This is particularly noticeable in placement-focused HCOs where the persistence of donors, IVCOs and INGOs in promoting the interests of the volunteer-sending countries in IVS policy and practice, rather than appointing qualified Malawians, constrain the relationships between the HCOs and their implementing partners.

On the other hand, HCOs are themselves equally susceptible to receiving inaccurate information that can impact on their performance. Malawian partners sometimes consent to the power of the HCO over resources even though they have not bought into the agenda for reasons that are different from the aims of IVS and can impact its course and outcomes. This implies a lack of transparency in the disclosure of the needs, expectations of outcomes - a lack of process-based trust - by both the HCO and the partner organisation, which may be either deliberate or unintentional. Six possible reasons for Malawian partners' consent to IVS have been identified from the data: i) cultural norms in Malawi, ii) financial benefits for the Malawian partner, iii) issues related to human resources, iv) increased access to materials and equipment, v) transience of relationships and vi) reputation and prestige.

The preceding summary of the findings shows that this research has produced new data by examining host country offices as boundary managers of five IVCOs, using a theoretical framework that examines different kinds of trust and power in situations when knowledge sharing is a key factor. Next, the chapter revisits the framework to reflect on its contribution and limitations in this research.

### 8.3 Revisiting the Theoretical Framework

This research has produced new data by examining host country offices of five IVCOs, as boundary managers, using a theoretical framework that examines different types of trust and power relations in situations when knowledge sharing is a key factor in the negotiation of relationships between the HCOs and their diverse IVS stakeholders. The framework, which was presented in Chapter 3, showed the diversity of IVS stakeholders, which was grouped into three categories in the process of data analysis, based on the relationships between the HCOs and:

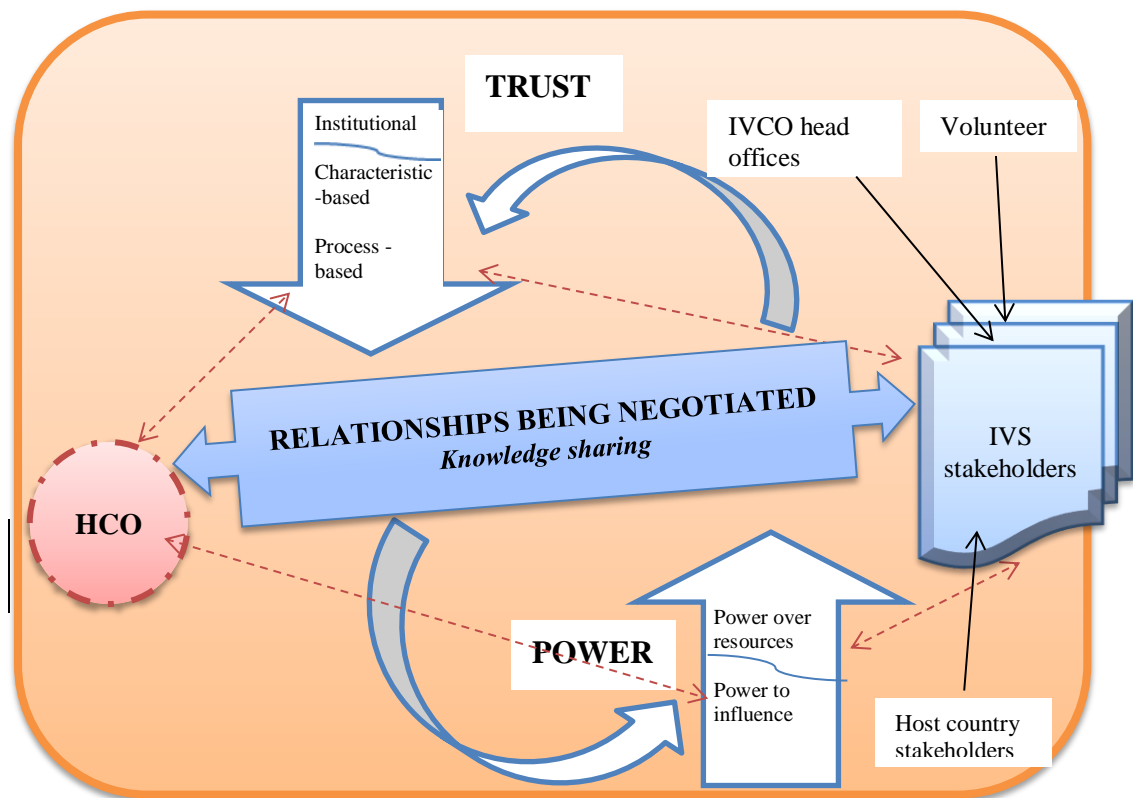
- i) The international volunteers
- ii) Their IVCO head office, and
- iii) The other stakeholders such as partner organisations, government and international funding agencies.

The purpose of this framework was to reach a better understanding of the relationships between HCOs and key IVS stakeholders at different operational levels of their work, why these relationships matter and how they affect what the HCOs do, to answer the research question:

*How do host country offices negotiate the multiple and diverse relationships involved in setting up and overseeing international volunteering service in development projects?*

Figure 8 below, reflects the way insight gained during the research developed in the course of this research combined to characterize the complexity of the relationships between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders. It draws out the interplay between trust and power relations in the negotiation of relationships between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders, and the significance of different forms of trust and the dynamics of power that support or constrain relationships in development programmes through IVS.

This study has developed a new theoretical framework (Figure 8) for analysing the role of trust and power in influencing the way HCOs negotiate relationships with IVS stakeholders at both global, and local, levels. The empirical evidence drawn from five international IVCOs in Malawi provides an extensive explanation of this framework, presented across three empirical chapters (Chapters 5, 6, 7). The research has revealed that the factors that can help bridge the gap between the theory and practice of IVS are related to how formal and informal relationships are negotiated between the HCOs and the IVS stakeholders. This thesis has argued that that different types of trust, power relations and the way knowledge is shared in the negotiation of relationships between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders, influence the course of IVS, and the development project in which it is incorporated, towards their intended aims. In doing so, this study moves beyond the established analysis of trust in IVS and links this domain to wider conceptual debates on power and knowledge sharing, through which, it offers new insight. It has reinforced the importance of knowledge sharing (Chapter 3, section 3.2.4) and its reciprocal connection to different types of trust and its impact on power relations in the negotiation of relationships as depicted in Figure 8.



**Figure 8:** Diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework for this thesis (Source: author)

Access to information (asymmetry of information leading to a moral hazard), utilisation of information to create knowledge is key to the role of HCOs as boundary managers. Their role as boundary managers is to make sure information reaches where it needs to so that it can become knowledge. In so doing, HCOs have to negotiate various relationships between different stakeholders by reducing the asymmetries of information or by providing information to partners who need that information. Showing the HCOs as boundary managers has been useful in conceptualising the multiple mandates and accountabilities that HCOs have to manage and the opportunities and challenges that they face in delivering these mandates.

Nevertheless, the framework also presented limitations and impedes the generalizability of some of the findings in this research. First, it is largely constrained by its static form, despite efforts to convey movement, and does not take into account the impact of changes and pressures brought about by external factors (global trends, histories, environmental issues) or contextual changes within the host country's institutional landscape of development, such as political, social or economic matters. Second, although the framework distinguishes between the three sets of stakeholders with which HCOs negotiate relationships, there are nuances in the relationships between the stakeholders that include different forms of trust, knowledge exchange and power relations that can influence the context of other relationships within IVS. Chapter 7 identified interdependence between the donors, the Government of Malawi and the HCOs, but on reflection, similar interdependencies also exist to varying degrees between different stakeholders - for example between the HCO and their head office - that also impact on their relationships with the other stakeholders. Thus relationships between the stakeholders, that might not directly involve the HCOs, also influence HCOs as boundary managers in ways that the framework does not capture.

The third factor is related to the diversity of the characteristics and organisational forms of HCOs. Much has been claimed in this research about the differences between HCOs and their head offices, but HCOs are also different from each other as organisational units and have different histories, mix of national and international staff and internal cultures, as well as objectives, policies and



procedures that influence their external relationships with the other IVS stakeholders. Crucially, the difference between development-focused and placement-focused IVCOs and the subsequent impact on the characteristics of their HCO was not recognised in the original framework. However, as shown at the end of section 6.2 of Chapter 6, the primary focus of the IVCO has a direct effect on how HCOs negotiate relationships within and outside of their parent organisations. Fourth is recognising the diverse conceptualisations of power in the relationships that have been examined. The literature on power is extensive and addresses various types of power in different levels, spaces and positions (Chapter 3, section 3.4). By focusing only on power over resources, and power to influence, other features in power relations that may be influential in the negotiation of the relationships are likely to have been neglected. Conceptualisations of trust in the literature are less numerous when compared to power, and tend to be nuanced forms of the Zucker's categorisation used in this research. However, the interplay between the different bases for trust, and the relationships between trust as "goodwill" or as "predictability" (Hardy et al., 1998) have not been captured in this research.

Fifth, although Chapter 3 (section 3.2) recognised histories, cultural norms and language as influential elements in the negotiation of relationships, they were only referred to anecdotally in this research, for example, in the histories of IVCOs (Chapter 6, section 6.2), and that of financial mismanagement in Malawi (Chapter 7, section 7.2); the cultural norms associated with time, and deference (Chapter 7, section 7.3), and language used to construct institutional and characteristic-based trust (Chapter 5, section 5.3). However, they signify that histories, cultural norms and language are influential factors in negotiating relationships in their own right and merit deeper investigation. Finally, the framework is limited to looking at a specific type of IVS for development but does not consider other potential influences such as age, ethnicity or gender of HCO staff or the volunteers and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the characterisation of international volunteering (compared to home country volunteering) is continually evolving in response to global political, social, economic and demographic trends leading to increasing

ambiguity surrounding the meaning and perceptions of IVS among all the stakeholders, which was captured in Chapters 5 and 7 of this thesis, but not represented in the original framework.

This section has examined the contribution and the limitations of the conceptual framework in investigating the dynamics of trust and power relations in the way relationships are negotiated between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders. The next section draws together the findings of the study to answer the overall conclusion of this thesis and is followed by an outline of its contribution to the policy, practice and theory of IVS, as well as recommendations for further research.

## **8.4 Overall conclusion**

This research has sought to contribute theoretical and practical insights into the gap between the theory and practice of IVS. It has responded to Nelson and Child's (2016, p. 543) allusion to IVCOs' organisational form as a black box, by studying the role of host country offices and how the way they negotiate relationships with the other IVS stakeholders supports or constrains the realisation of the intended outcomes of development intervention through IVS. In doing so, it attempted to prise open the black box and examine what might be inside.

The research has highlighted the crucial role of HCOs in development through international volunteering and provided new insight into existing inconsistencies between the theory and practice of IVS. By conceptualising and critically exploring HCOs as 'boundary managers', this study provided new insights not only in the ways in which HCOs can identify the tensions between Global North and Global South contexts, but also the strategies that can be deployed to effectively manage these in a way that enhances the impact of development programmes and initiatives in the host country. This research offers insight into the ways placements are affected by organizational structures. This is important since to date, the majority of the literature on IVS focuses on international volunteers and on their experiences of success or failure. The approach used helps

situate these experiences within the wider political economy of development, highlighting a new area of interest for academics in this area.

This study has identified mismatches around HCO's development orientations and the needs of volunteers that help explain some of the inconsistencies between the theory and practice of IVS. It shows that the gap between theory and practice of IVS is narrower when HCOs are able to focus on strategic development interventions through long-term partnerships that allow trust to develop over time. Such a focus also involves providing the HCOs with adequate access to resources to do their work, spaces and opportunities to participate in democratic processes, facilitating information exchange and reciprocal knowledge sharing, while holding HCOs accountable for what they do.

In contrast, the gap between theory and practice of IVS becomes wider when IVCOs' organisational focus drives their HCOs to 'farm' projects opportunistically (Chapter 5, section 5.3.1), to satisfy the mandate from their head offices. Such an approach to IVS adds situational variables which can affect the delivery of the intended outcomes of IVS. A fragmented approach that engages IVS in thematic areas of development increases the likelihood of conflicting priorities, goal uncertainty and inadequate evaluative processes for HCOs' staff, and potentially leads to a breakdown of trust which can adversely affect the contribution of IVS to the development intervention. Thus the research has shown that delivery of development goals reliably, and consistently, is more of a challenge for IVCOs that remained a volunteer-sending agency for a sustained period of time before directing their efforts more towards development.

Locating international volunteering within the Malawian development landscape (Chapter 6), the thesis helps move debate further again from the emphasis on the international volunteer and on the dynamics that shape their decisions to volunteer. In other words, it moves the discussion towards a more critical engagement with the setting in the global South and the ways these articulate with international organizational forms. Furthermore, the study adds a new dimension of research to IVS through the discussion of ambiguities around its evolving terminology.

Perceptions of risk can be minimised when trust in the relationship is based on repeated past experiences of positive outcomes (process-based trust). This research has shown opportunities for building process-based trust are limited in the arena of international development through IVS. Thus there is an over-reliance on institutional-trust and characteristic-based trust between the HCOs, and the other stakeholders, including the volunteers (Chapters 5 and 7) based on prevailing perceptions and beliefs. However, institutional trust and characteristic-based types of trust can be misplaced or misleading because they can be based on inaccurate or outdated perceptions or expectations that can be constructed - particularly by placement-focused IVCOs - to appeal to targeted audiences (such as donors, and potential volunteers) through documents, reports, web pages and the media. Geographical and cultural barriers present asymmetry of knowledge and limit the possibility of process-based trust between the HCOs' staff and the international volunteers before their acceptance and arrival at the post. Thus, if volunteers' expectations are not met on arrival, they can exercise their power to engage in activities outside the mandates of IVS, or return home, either way, creating a gap in the processes and outcomes of IVS and the wider project.

The next section sets out the study's contribution to empirical, theoretical knowledge and policy.

## **8.5 Contribution of research**

### ***8.5.1 Empirical contribution***

The empirical focus in this thesis is on a project with a very specific organisational unit of a particular type of INGO, yet the findings are relevant to a range of non-profit, decentralised organisations where relationships have to be negotiated with multiple and diverse stakeholders, at different levels and across national and international boundaries to achieve joint outcomes. HCOs are considered anecdotally in the literature and externally to their contextual situation. This not only excludes the perspectives of HCOs, but it also ignores the possibility that HCOs' perspectives might be of importance and value. This assumption pervades much of the literature, not only on international volunteering but in NGO and development management literature.

By using HCOs as the unit of analysis, this study explored what is valued in HCOs' work from the HCO staff's own perspectives and those of the people and organisations that they work with. This study has shown how the HCOs perceive their work is sometimes different from the IVCO narrative of what is expected of them, and that the HCOs' relationships with IVS stakeholders, including with their head offices, is shaped by complex formal and informal relationships in different contextual settings.

Insights from this research can add to knowledge on how to achieve improvements in the quality of programme implementation and explain the paths that led to intended and unintended outcomes of development interventions. The acknowledgement that rapid change is occurring worldwide and locally, and that historical factors influence contemporary situations ultimately brings clarity and depth to analyses.

Finally, this research has highlighted the importance of process-based trust in supporting cooperation in relationships and positive outcomes of those relationships. This is because process-based trust facilitate both of the key characteristics of trust: 'goodwill' defined as mutual expectations of reciprocity between partners (Ring and Van De Ven, 1992) and 'predictability', defined as the probability with which an actor assesses that another actor will act in a certain way (Luhmann, 1979; Zucker, 1986). What differentiates process-based trust from institutional and characteristic-based types of trust is the element of predictability based on the continuity of past-experiences which make it a process, rather than assumptions that may or may not be accurate or may have changed over time.

The study has also shown that process-based trust is difficult to build in development programmes. Geographical distance, diversity of cultures, languages social and economic backgrounds, the multiplicity of actors with dissimilar motivations and agendas and movement of personnel leave little time for learning or reflection and make it extremely difficult to build process-based trust. The challenges of building process-based trust in IVS, are further complicated because the inclusion of

the volunteer adds an extra variable element into the mix of relationships between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders. Consequently, any initiative or action that increases time in the relationships between actors will also increase opportunities for building process-based trust. For example, internal mechanisms that improve both staff and volunteer retention (such as appropriate resourcing, remunerations, training and career development); longer-term IVS placements, frequency of formal and informal communications and feedback systems that involve face to face interactions between HCO staff, their head office colleagues and the volunteers (including using technology such as mobile phones and Skype).

### ***8.5.2 Contribution to theory***

HCOs are pivotal to the course of determining development interventions appropriate for volunteer placement and managing all the processes involved before, during, and often after the volunteers' time in post. This research contributes to knowledge by addressing a gap in the literature on development management through international volunteering by focusing not on volunteers, but on the HCOs of IVCOs. In doing so, it has provided insights into the underlying reasons for the contradictions and imbalance between theory and practice of IVS.

The significance of the role of HCOs is illustrated in the way the theoretical framework created for this research evolved from its original form in Chapter 3 (section 3.5) into a conceptual construct (this Chapter, section 8.3), that adds to the literature on development management through IVS. The conceptual framework has provided an innovative and multi-disciplinary perspective of IVCOs as an organisational form, and the HCOs as a distinct component of development management. It has done so, by drawing from the literature on MNCs and boundary organisations, linking them to the way trust and power relations in intra- and inter-organisational relationships influence how HCOs share knowledge and negotiate relationships with their IVS stakeholders. The research contributes to the understanding of the influences of trust and power in the negotiation of relationships between actors in the following situations:

- It adds to the literature on MNCs and NGO management by showing that the HCOs' intra-organisational relationship with their central office influences how they negotiate their

inter-organisational relations with the other IVS actors, thus influencing how HCOs make connections across organisational boundaries. Furthermore, the study shows that power relations between head office and HCOs of decentralised organisations are linked to the institutional values of the organisation, which in turn, determines its approach to knowledge sharing within, and outside, the organisation, how it responds to external change and how external influences are then interpreted into internal policies.

- It extends the concept of boundary organisations from its origins in scientific/non-scientific work (Chapter 2, section 2.6), linking it with the literature on development management. In this way, it provides a better understanding of the challenges that HCOs face in negotiating several relationships with diverse stakeholders. HCOs have to bridge not just two, but multiple, boundaries as ‘agents of development’ (Chapter 2, section 2.3) with several accountabilities. Framing HCOs as boundary managers has also provided an appreciation of the importance of symmetry in information exchange and knowledge sharing in IVS work.
- It shows that in situations when the multiplicity of stakeholders in a competitive environment makes building process-based trust problematic, institutional and characteristic-based trust can be used to partially or entirely include or exclude actors in relationship negotiations, resulting in changes in the distribution of power that can help legitimise and maintain the supremacy of the dominant or colluding actors.
- Using insight from science studies to frame HCOs as boundary managers has helped highlight the critical and multiple challenges that they face and can be extended to the study of other INGOs and aid agencies that work through host country offices. The diversity of IVCO forms and structures, as well as the interconnected relationships with multiple stakeholders, make it difficult to offer generalised insights. Nevertheless, conceptualizing HCOs as boundary managers offers the possibility of integrating multiple types of information in useable forms for the different stakeholders and can help support the negotiation of power relations, particularly with powerful actors such as international donors or governments (Clark et al., 2016).

Consequently, insights from this study have extended the relevance of this thesis to the wider literature on development management, and NGO and volunteer management as sub-sets, and provided the potential for using the findings from this study in further investigative work around the role of host country offices of international non-profit organisations. Furthermore, few studies

within the volunteer management literature have sought to understand the implications of managing and coordinating the activities and welfare of international volunteers in geographically and culturally different contexts.

### ***8.5.3 Contribution to methodology***

The relationships between the HCOs and their stakeholders are important and influential in IVS processes, yet are persistently understudied. Using a cross-case approach, this research moved beyond the tendency of contemporary literature to focus on volunteers and, instead, attended to theory and research associated with HCOs and the way that they negotiate the different relationships with their stakeholders. A cross-case study involves examining a mixture of data from multiple sources within the same study (Miles and Huberman, 1989). Multiple cases allow comparisons that clarify whether an emergent finding is unique to a single case or generalizable by several cases.

The choice of cross-case study to methodology represents an innovative approach to investigating relationships that have to be negotiated with multiple actors with diverse interests and in different contexts. The approach to data collection is original in the sense that it engages a set of actors often ignored in international volunteer research. Making use of structured and diverse perspectives in the data, the approach allowed for considerations of similarities and differences within and between cases (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 19), making possible a deeper interrogation of the beliefs and behaviours that underpinned the relationships between the HCOs and their stakeholders.

The study advances existing workplace relationships literature on development management through IVS by integrating trust and power as elements of human behaviour in the analysis of data. In doing so, it moves beyond the positive/negative discourse on IVS by showing how the interplay between trust and power affect interpersonal functions for HCOs workplace relationships, and hence, offers an agenda for future scholarship.



#### ***8.5.4 Contribution to policy***

Lewis (2014, pp. 36–8) observes that many NGOs and INGOs are reluctant to get involved with management because i) their leaders consider time should be used to “get out there and get things done”, rather than on organisational issues and ii) the belief that donors consider that money spent on management and overheads can be better spent on helping intended beneficiaries of development. This research has enabled a closer investigation of how the way relationships between individuals and organisations are negotiated impact on the aims and processes of IVS. It reveals implications, not only for the design and management of IVS processes in development projects, but the management of host country offices within IVCOs in particular and in NGO management in general. In doing so, considering the role of HCOs as boundary managers is useful in developing an understanding of the challenges that they face in their day to day work and support the formulation of policies and practices that can help them to fulfil their multiple mandates.

Volunteering presents challenges for accountability, the management of intra- and inter-organisational relationships and the need for operational effectiveness to be rooted in these relationships. Yet policy implications rarely consider that HCOs should be allowed the autonomy to pursue and develop their own unique characteristics, to be primarily accountable to their target beneficiaries, even though they are held accountable for financial reporting and technical assessment of their activities (Johansson et al., 2010, p. 372). This study has highlighted a number of ways in which HCOs could be assisted in strengthening their boundary management role notably:

- Minimising the ambiguity of definition and descriptions of IVS its objectives and the roles of the actors.
- Closer alignment of IVS policy and practice requires a shift of the intra-organisational norms and behaviours to allow the integration of HCOs through increased opportunities for participation in policy formulation processes in more democratic structures.

- In a rapidly changing and complex world, people working in HCOs are also in increasing need of relevant knowledge and skills. Changes in organisational practices are not just deliverable through formal structures, policies and procedures, but informal behaviours and attitude that promote trust-generation, openness in reciprocal information exchange as well as opportunities and spaces for empowerment through democratic participation.

This research has shown that a development-focused/demand-driven approach to IVS can facilitate the formulation of robust proposals, that are realistic for human, physical and logistical resources, and can create trust-based relationships between the HCOs and their IVS stakeholders leading to better processes, and potentially, to better outcomes.

## **8.6 Recommendations for wider research**

Chapter 2 revealed that HCOs are occasionally mentioned in the literature that examines IVS but mainly about research questions focused on volunteering. The scarcity of research focusing on the organisational characteristics of IVS (Nelson and Child, 2016) and the dearth of academic work on the role of HCOs in development management (Chapter 2) mean that this thesis can only serve as a first step to gaining further insight into this critical but neglected component of IVS. However, rather than viewing relationships among the stakeholders of IVS in purely professional, technical and contractual terms, this study has probed how the dynamics of trust and power shape, and are shaped by, the way relationships are negotiated.

Although the scope of this research extended only to the in-depth study of five IVCOs in Malawi, the conceptual and practical basis of this thesis has created room for improvement by learning from the similar operations in other countries. Thus findings from this research could also find applicability in other contexts. By increasing the diversity of national level studies on development IVCOs, research can continue building a framework to assess how global and local contexts interact to construct and improve management practices.

Not surprisingly, peripheral issues of significance appeared in the course of the research that would provide interesting avenues for further theoretical and empirical exploration. The most pertinent issues are:

- A more in-depth exploration of the concepts of development-focused and placement-focused approach to IVS as strategies for development intervention
- More extensive examination of the role of HCOs and NGOs as boundary managers, in different settings, with particular emphasis on symmetry in knowledge sharing and information exchange.
- The relevance of Guston's 'moral hazard' in the relationship between key actors (donors, INGOs (and their HCOs), NGOs, governments, partner organisations and community groups) in a development management context
- The relationships between host country employees and employed foreign staff in the same administrative unit of the organisation, for example:
  - Power and trust relations
  - Issues related to culture and authority
  - Remuneration and benefit packages
  - Career development affecting national staff
  - Knowledge of local context, culture and language affecting foreign employees.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1A: United Nations Volunteers (UNV)*

UNV was launched by the United Nations General Assembly and started its operations in 1971 (UNV Volunteers - Chronology, 2001). Based in Germany, UNV is active in around 130 countries and reports to the UNDP Executive Board. 80 per cent of UN Volunteers are from the global South and serve for 30 months on average (UNV, 2016b).

The UNV facility in Malawi is situated within the UNDP complex in Malawi's Capital, Lilongwe. UNV does not have its own funded project or programme in Malawi but is a key partner in the implementation of programme activities of some UN agencies in the country. The UNV Programme Officer role is also a volunteer position that has access to the heads of Agencies and is occasionally required to provide status updates on UNV programmes and activities. The UNV programme in Malawi has the largest number of volunteers in the Southern Africa portfolio - the target number of placements in Malawi for 2016 was 64. UN volunteers work in a range of placements in Malawi including as medical professionals, health and nutrition advisors, and programmes aimed at the empowerment of women, climate change mitigation, poverty reduction, emergency relief and infrastructure improvement (UNV, 2016a).

### *Appendix 1B: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*

The German Development Service (Deutsche Entwicklungsdienstes, DED) was established in 1963 but merged with the German Technical Cooperation Agency, GTZ, and InWEnt (Capacity Building International) to form GIZ in 2011 (GIZ, 2016a). According to the website, GIZ is a German enterprise operating in 120 countries and engaged 577 development advisors (GIZ, 2018a).

In Germany, although the revision of the term 'volunteer' to 'Development Advisor' was accompanied by a revised benefit package in the 1980s, the Development Advisors continue to be protected by the "Entwicklungshelfer-Gesetz" (Volunteer Law), introduced 1969:

*"A volunteer is somebody undertaking a minimum of two years' service in developing countries for a state-approved provider of development services without any view to*

*pecuniary gain....The Volunteer Law stipulates that they receive a maintenance allowance for the duration of their assignment and that their social insurance contributions are paid”*  
(Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development b 2010-2016)

GIZ has been operating in Malawi for over 30 years and, in 2015, 35 seconded staff, 75 local staff, 25 development advisors and 15 Integrated Experts worked in Malawi in 2015. GIZ Malawi’s priority areas are: education, health and social protection; private sector development in rural areas; sustainable infrastructure, governance and democracy, as well as public financial and economic management (GIZ, 2016b). Details of all programmes including objectives, partner organisations and latest reviews are available on the GIZ Malawi website as well as in brochure form available freely at the GIZ office in Lilongwe. Each Programme brochure is designed to state context, objectives, approach, success factors, as well as introducing partners, the commissioning body, the overall budget and overall project terms (see Appendix 4). Noticeable in all electronic and paper documentations is the high emphasis on staff welfare, education and development.

### ***Appendix 1C: Voluntary Service Oversees (VSO)***

VSO was founded as an independent organisation by Alec and Moira Dickson in 1958 (Bird, 1998, pp. 11–15). From the start, VSOs emphasis was on service, rather than technical assistance, through the deployment of youths from post-war Britain to poor countries. VSO received support from the British government through the use of administrative offices of the British Council until 1980, and financial contribution from the UK government which peaked in 1979-80 at 90% of expenditure incurred in sending volunteers (Bird, 1998, pp. 42–100). In 2011 the UK government introduced a strategy of reducing the level of support for VSO from DFID from 52% in 2010/11 to 35% in 2013/14 with the intention of reducing VSO’s dependence on centrally funded DFID support and stimulating the increase and diversification of VSO’s sources of income (OECD 2010, p.151; Ledward and Trivedy, 2010). Currently, around 73% of VSO income are from both DFID, and ‘other governmental incomes’(VSO International, 2018b).

VSO’s has retained its organisational focus on placing volunteers in development, making use of

opportunities to expand its portfolio by ‘mopping up’ younger European citizens who were not qualified or experienced enough to become development workers (Bird, 1998). Later, a national membership programme introduced by VSO in 1982 collapsed in 1989 when “the expectations of the members for... a more democratic governance, did not materialize” despite payment of subscriptions (Bird, 1998, p. 122). In 2005, a merger with British Executive Services Overseas (BESO)<sup>37</sup> provided VSO with increased opportunities to deliver technical assistance through older and professional international volunteers.

VSO has been in Malawi at least since 1965. A country-specific website was introduced or made accessible to public in 2017 (VSO International, 2016c). The number of international volunteers in programme placements in Malawi in 2016 is not declared on the website but the number of staff in the Malawi office is stated as 15 (VSO International, 2016c), although the number, according to the organisational structure obtained during data collection staff were numbered at 30. Areas of programmatic activity for VSO Malawi are education, women and girls’ health, and agriculture and climate change. Annual Report document as well as job descriptions and MOUs with partner organisations are available for most volunteer placements.

### *Appendix 1D: Progressio*

Progressio, originally called The Sword of the Spirit, was founded by a group of lay Catholics in 1940, but expanded its activities to include issues such as food aid and human rights leading to collaboration with the British Volunteer Programme in 1963, which involved recruiting volunteers to work overseas (Progressio, 2016b). After a name change in 1965, it changed name again to Progressio to reflect its wider values and efforts in developing countries (Progressio, 2016b).

In 1974 Progressio substituted volunteers for ‘development workers’: “skilled professionals to do specific jobs in response to specific needs identified by partners in the South”, (Progressio, 2016b).

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<sup>37</sup> BESO was a UK independent charitable organisation that provided development assistance through professional volunteers undertaking short consultancy and training assignments (Open Learn Works, 2016)

Progressio (2016b) also declares itself as the first international development agency to begin recruiting local staff – rather than expatriates – to run its offices in the countries where it worked. Progressio remained largely reliant on funding from DFID up to 35% in 2014 – 2015 (Progressio, 2016a), finally falling victim to the revised strategy by DFID to discontinue its unrestricted grant programme from December 2016, and issued a closure notice, effective at the end of December 2016 (Progressio, 2016c).

Progressio opened its country programme in Malawi in 2007, shifting resources from its programme in Namibia which was being wound down. In 2016, Progressio Malawi was facing financial challenges, with the only remaining operations being those of a single Development Worker, and the ICS (Chapter 6, section 6.2.2) placements sub-contracted through VSO. The Progressio office in Lilongwe had a staff of three, inclusive of the Country Director who, incidentally, was the only Malawian national in that position among the five IVCOs in the case study.

### *Appendix 1E: The Peace Corps*

The Peace Corps was founded in 1961, based on a vision expressed by President John F. Kennedy “for Americans to serve their country and their world” (Peace Corps, 2016b). Amin (1999, p. 39) suggests that the founding of the Peace Corps was rooted in the politics of the Cold War which explains why the Peace Corps was established within the “‘Mutual Security Act’.....intended to promote America’s interest in the Cold War”.

The Peace Corps is an independent agency within the executive branch of the United States government, and its Director and deputy director are appointed by the U.S. President. The Peace Corps works in over 60 countries worldwide but receives 100% of its funding from the US Government, although significant resources are invested in returning volunteers: “bringing the learning home” (Interviewee HQ 6). Although Peace Corps has remained predominantly for the younger people (Interviewee HQ 6), shorter placements are available through Peace Corps Response (PCR) scheme for returned volunteers or those “with significant professional and

technical experience”(Peace Corps, 2016b). More recently, the Global Health Service Partnership (GHSP) was founded in 2012. However, these initiatives remain a small percentage of the total level of activity undertaken by Peace Corps (Peace Corps, 2016b).

Malawi’s first Peace Corps volunteers arrived in 1963, and following a period of suspension under the Banda regime, the programme was restored in 1978. Peace Corps Malawi (2016d) website stated that 122 volunteers worked in partnerships with the Government of Malawi in: Education, Environment and Health sectors. Additionally, Peace Corps Malawi implements the PCR and GHSP pilot programmes where American doctors and nurses “work with Malawian medical and nursing students to build the cadre of health professionals in Malawi” (The Peace Corps, 2017). Peace Corps Malawi website provides photograph and full list of all 45 staff members, by name, including support staff such as drivers and janitors. Peace Corps is the only IVCO in this study that train their volunteers learn to speak local languages during the first month of orientation.

**Appendix 2: Table showing the benefit packages received by international volunteers**

IVCO	Terminology used for service	Allowance, \$USD p.m.	Benefits Package *	Post completion of placement	Comments
<b>UNV</b>	Volunteer	\$1571	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to import car tax-free</li> <li>• Diplomatic immunity</li> <li>• Business expenses and fuel</li> </ul>		Able to sell the car at local prices, having paid no tax to import
<b>VSO</b>	Volunteer	\$193 (+ \$28 for security guard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate housing with basic furniture</li> <li>• Occasional business expenses</li> <li>• Motorbike (in rural areas)</li> </ul>	National insurance paid in UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licence to ride motorbike is stated as mandatory but not enforced.</li> <li>• Motorbike training is required but not enforced.</li> </ul>
<b>GIZ</b>	Development Advisor	€2,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$430-550 p.m. housing allowance</li> <li>• Car &amp; business fuel</li> <li>• Able to import tax free vehicle</li> <li>• Diplomatic immunity</li> <li>• Business expenses</li> </ul>	By law, employers safeguards volunteers' jobs for up to 6 years.	Able to sell the car at local prices, having paid no tax to import
<b>Peace Corps</b>	Volunteer	Sufficient to live at the level community level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free housing in rural area; may have electricity and/or water taps, but most do not.</li> <li>• Mountain bike</li> </ul>	\$8,000 (pre-tax) on completion of two years of service, and resettlement support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory, one month home-stay pre-service language and cross-cultural training.</li> <li>• Driving motor vehicles/ motorcycles prohibited except under special circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Progressio</b>	Development Worker	\$1380	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate housing provided by partner</li> </ul>	National insurance paid in UK	

Table showing the benefit packages received by international volunteers engaged in Malawi by IVCOs in this research. The figures are based on values in May/June 2016 (Source: author)

\*All IVCOs provide medical insurance and return flights

**Appendix 3: IVC03 Vacancy advertisement, May 21-27, 2016**

**Employment Opportunity  
- Head of Programmes**

■■■■■ is an International development organisation that contributes towards addressing poverty and disadvantage through the placement of international skilled professional volunteers with national partners.

■■■■■ is seeking an experienced, highly motivated and ambitious development professional who will raise the profile of ■■■■■ and take ■■■■■ country programme to the next level in terms of scale and impact. You will play a leading role in the delivery of ■■■■■ country strategic plan. This is an open ended/ fixed term of three years (3) contract.

**Key Responsibilities:**

- Lead the business development process of the programme focusing on the delivery of the country strategy.
- Support the Country Director with the implementation of the country strategic plan and programmes.
- Ensure employees and volunteers are engaged and aligned with ■■■■■-global vision, mission, values, strategic directions and business plan.
- Foster effective ongoing communication between employees and volunteers in country.
- Take a lead in and support the annual programme planning and budgeting process.
- Mentor program managers and officers in developing innovative programme proposals targeting key priority programmes to maximise the external funding base.
- Coach team members to develop results based project budgets.
- Lead the design and development of strategic programmes and projects.
- Build internal capacity for appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to determine impact, and ensure continuous development and learning takes place.
- Support the programme team to develop, manage and monitor programme budgets
- Lead and train the team on grant management, ensuring donor compliance is fully adhered to and donor reports are completed on time and are of a high quality.
- Lead the programme team in assessing, negotiating, maintaining and reviewing relevant partnerships.

The Essential requirements for this post are:

**Ideal Applicant Summary**

- Mastery of knowledge in Development studies
- High level of academic achievement in a relevant subject area to social development
- Substantial senior level programme leadership and management experience in a complex INGO
- Evidence of progressive experience in evidence-based programme development,
- Proven programme development and management experience

**Ability to demonstrate:**

- Successful team leadership and management experience in a complex INGO.
- High level involvement in strategy development and implementation work
- Innovation in development especially in moving development outcomes into advocacy.

**Ability to manage:**

- Significant-sized budgets successfully.
- Fundraising and M&E expertise
- Representation and negotiation skills – ability to negotiate difficult deals and maintain relations with external stakeholders.
- Advanced computer skills in MS Office word, outlook and excel.
- Financial Management – Proven ability to develop and provide strategic monitoring to program budgets.
- Planning and Time Management – Able to prioritise tasks, manage time and tight schedules, work effectively under pressure, and assist direct reports with prioritization of tasks and meeting deadlines.
- Representation and negotiation skills – ability to negotiate difficult deals and maintain relations with external stakeholders.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Computer skills – MS Office, Outlook, internet.
- Ability to travel and spend time away from base and home as required.

**Desirable:**

- Work experience or good understanding of the Malawian context.
- Good understanding of the Malawi development context; experience in at least one sector of ■■■■■ current work: education, disability or youth/livelihoods; and possibly also experience of working in organizations that use volunteers
- Ability to communicate in English (Writing and speaking).

**How to Apply**

if you are interested in applying for this role, please download the job description and more details about the position from the following web address: ■■■■■. To submit your application, click on 'Apply now' and complete all relevant fields on the online application form. Please make sure you have attached your latest detailed CV. This position is open to Malawian Nationals and Internationals with valid work permits only. Closing date for this position is **27 May, 2016**.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted and invited for interviews.



## Appendix 4: Example of an IVCO2 programme brochure



Published by:



# Strengthening Public Financial and Economic Management in Malawi (PFEM)

## Context

Ever since the 'cashgate' scandal, a massive looting of public money discovered in October 2013, the deficiencies of the Malawian public financial management system have come to full attention of citizens, policy-makers, and development partners. All concerned Malawian institutions will have to make an effort to increase accountability for the use of public finances and regain the trust of citizens. The withdrawal of budget support by development partners also has underscored the need to better mobilise domestic revenues.

In line with these demands, [redacted] support in the area of public finance and in June 2014 entered into a new phase of the Project 'Strengthening Public Financial and Economic Management'.

## Objective

[redacted] institutions [redacted] are more accountable, effective and transparent.

## Approach

The [redacted] supports the Government of Malawi (GoM) in implementing [redacted] reforms to achieve increased accountability and to regain the trust of the citizens after the 'cashgate' scandal. The Integrated Financial Management System (IFMIS) is being stabilized and strengthened; internal auditors are being supported in their efforts at ensuring effective audits

## Partners

Commissioned by  
Overall budget  
Overall project term

July 2012 – June 2017

in their respective Ministries, Departments and Agencies; and external audit is being strengthened by striving for a better functioning of the institution in line with international standards for Supreme Audit Institutions, including increased quality and coverage of audits. On the demand side for accountability, with the support of the programme, [redacted] are undertaking efforts to broaden the tax-base and to strengthen internal integrity. The civil society is being engaged to enhance their information and voice their needs and demands with regard to an effective and efficient use of taxpayers' money. In order to improve the link between planning and budgeting, forecasting, contract management and monitoring and evaluation are target areas for program interventions. Increasing civil society's knowledge about public finance issues as well as their active participation, for instance in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, is another area of work in the project.

The PFEM Project, commissioned by the [redacted] is working together with several Partners in the field of Public Financial Management. While the main Partner for the Project is the [redacted], the Project is actively engaging with the [redacted] Unit, the [redacted] Office, the Malawi [redacted] Authority, Office of [redacted] Office, amongst others.



More accountable, transparent and efficient PFEM institutions for the use of the public money in the benefit of the people and the development of the country.

*Appendix 5: Informed Consent Form*



**DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE**

**Consent form for persons participating in a research project**

**THE ROLE OF HOST-COUNTRY OFFICES IN INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING**

Name of participant:

Name of principal investigator(s): Behi Barzegar

*Please tick the box to indicate your agreement*

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written statement in plain language to keep. ☐
  2. I understand that my participation will involve **TAKING PART IN INTERVIEWS, DISCUSSIONS OR OBSERVATIONS WHICH MAY BE AUDIO-TAPED AND/OR PHOTOGRAPHED** and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement. ☐
  3. I acknowledge that:
    - (a) The possible effects of participating in this research have been explained to my satisfaction; ☐
    - (b) I have been informed that, during the data gathering phase, I am free to withdraw or modify my consent and to ask for the destruction of all or part of the data I have contributed at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided; ☐
    - (c) The project is for the purpose of research; ☐
    - (d) Please select ONE of the following:
      - I would like my name used and understand that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognized. ☐
      - I do not want my name used in this project; if necessary any data from me will be referred to by a pseudonym in any publications arising from this research ☐
    - (e) I have been informed that with my consent the data generated will be stored on **SECURE MOBILE DEVICE AND ENCRYPTED FLASH DRIVE** and will be destroyed after five years; ☐
    - (g) I have been informed that a summary copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, on my request. ☐
- I consent to my participation being audio-taped/photographed ☐yes ☐no  
(please tick)

*Appendix 6: Semi-structured interview questions*

**The Role of Host-Country Offices in International Volunteering  
Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

Name:  
Organization:  
Partner organisation

Role:  
Duration:  
Target Beneficiaries:

For Programme Offices:

- What do you understand the objectives (name of the IVCO) to be? How do you know?
  - Have these objectives been the same while you've been here? If they have changed, do you know why?
  - Do you report to a specific person/department? What is the feedback loop between you?
1. What is the relationship between your organization and HQ/IVCOs? How does it work? How are organizational objectives shared?
  2. What is your role in this relationship? What do YOU do? How do you do it?
  3. What constraints do you face in the relations/interactions with the HQ? (IVCO)s? Are there differences between different IVCOs?? What constraints do you think they face? How effectively do you think these challenges are overcome?
- Thinking of a specific project as an example.....
4. How are projects identified & their objectives negotiated? Who is involved? Why? How?
  5. Who would you consider are the stakeholders? Why?
  6. How much of your work involves interactions/relations with other stakeholders? How do you go about it?
  7. How is the role of an international volunteer negotiated and agreed? With whom? How?
  8. Describe your relations with the international volunteers. What were the opportunities and what were the constraints in this relationship? *Please try to give examples to illustrate*
  9. How would you describe the impact of the presence of international volunteers at work? In the community? Why? How do you know?

*Appendix 7: Beneficiary group questions*

## Questions for Service Recipients

### **Explanation:**

This is to find out about the relationship between IVCO programmatic staff and the people who receive their services. It tries to find out what people think about the work that the programmes that involve international volunteers, the positive and negative ways that it impacts their lives; and what feelings they are left with, after the volunteers leave.

**Introductions:** Please tell me a little about yourself, your background, and what do you normally do for a living?

1. What is the relationship between you and the programme organisers? (for example: teacher/student).
  - How often do you see them?
  - How does the relationship with the volunteer work?
  - How many international volunteers have you personally worked with? In what roles were they?
2. How did you become involved in this programme?
  - Why were you interested?
  - Where did you hear about it?
  - How did you join the programme? What was the process?
  - What choices did you have? And why did you choose the one that you did?
3. Tell me how the programme actually works? What do you do?
  - How often do you see the organisers (volunteer or other organisers)?
4. What have you learnt from this programme?
  - How will what you have learnt change what you do?
  - What do you think are the benefits of the programme?
  - How do you know that?
  - What changes will the program make to the community? In your opinion, what will be the indicators of change in the community?
5. What are the challenges for you in this programme? Can you give me some examples please?
  - How do you deal with these challenges?
  - What do you think the challenges are for the foreign volunteer? Why do you think that?
  - How well do you think she copes with them?
  - What are some challenges about working with an international volunteer? Can you give me some examples please?
  - What do you feel when they leave?

*Appendix 8: Volunteer questions*

**The Role of Host-Country Offices in International Volunteering  
Questionnaire for International Volunteers**

Name:  
Organization:  
Partner organisation

Role:  
Duration:  
Target Beneficiaries:

1. Describe your actual activities during your placement. How did these compare with your expectations of the role?
2. Describe what resources were available to you by the organization. How did the availability/non-availability of these resources impact on your performance in the role?
3. Describe your relations with the partner organization/ counterpart. What were the opportunities and what were the constraints in this relationship? *Please try to give examples to illustrate*
4. Describe your relations with the community. What were the opportunities and what were the constraints in this relationship? *Please try to give examples to illustrate*
5. Describe your relations with the program office. What were the opportunities and what were the constraints in this relationship? *Please try to give examples to illustrate*
6. Would you volunteer with the same organization again? Please give reasons for your choice of answer.

## Appendix 9: Contact Summary Form

## CONTACT SUMMARY FORM

**Contact type:**

**Visit:**

**Phone:**

(with whom)

**Site:****Contact date:**

**Today's date:**

**Written by: BB**

- 1. What were the main issues that struck me in this contact?**
- 2. Summary of the information I got (or failed to get) on each of the target questions I had for this contact**
- 3. Anything else that struck me as salient/ interesting / illuminating or important in this contact?**
- 4. What new (or remaining) target questions do I have in considering the next contact with this site?**

## Appendix 10: Permit to conduct Research in Malawi



CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

P.O. BOX 278, ZOMBA, MALAWI

**DIRECTOR**

Alister Munthali, BSc, MSc (Mw), MA (Amsterdam); PhD (Rhodes)

Telephone: (265) 1 524 800/1 525 194

Fax: (265) 1 524 578/1 524 760

E-mail: [csr@sdnp.org.mw](mailto:csr@sdnp.org.mw)

Our Ref.: CSRI/1/1

16<sup>th</sup> March 2016

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Research Affiliation to CSR**

This is to certify that the bearer of this letter is a Research Affiliate of the Centre for Social Research (CSR), which is a research arm of the Faculty of Social Science, Chancellor College, University of Malawi. Behi Barzegar has satisfied all the requirements for research affiliation at the University of Malawi. Her application has been cleared and endorsed by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research.

Behi Barzegar has been granted the Research Affiliate status with CSR for one year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. During this period she will be working on a research study titled: International Volunteering Outcomes: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice through a Host Country Perspective. Her project permit reference number is CSRI/1/2/16.

In keeping in line with the University of Malawi's knowledge management strategy, Behi Barzegar is obligated to share with us three copies of the research report that she will produce at the end of her research as well as any publications arising thereof. These copies will be distributed as follows: one copy to be retained by CSR, one copy for the University Library and one for the National Archives. She will also make a seminar presentation to the wider Chancellor College community to share the preliminary impressions of her research findings.

We will be grateful for any assistance and support that you would render to her as she carries out her research. In case of doubt, please do not hesitate to get in touch with either the undersigned or Dr. Alister Munthali, the Director of CSR, on 0888 577 842 and 0888 822 004.

Yours Sincerely,

Professor Blessings Chinsinga  
FOR: DIRECTOR, CSR



## ***Appendix 11: Terms of Reference for research***

### ***The Role of Host Country Offices in International Volunteering - the case of Malawi***

This research is led by Ms Behi Barzegar, a PhD student from the Development Policy and Practice Unit of the Open University in the UK.

The research aims to gain insight into the significance of local context in international development work and international volunteering, thus addressing a gap in knowledge about the role of host country offices of international development organisations that work through volunteers. Host country offices are the mediators, negotiators, decision makers and administrators, who research and identify host country recipients, design programmes, select partnerships, as well as oversee the security and welfare of the international volunteers and monitor their performance, thereby significantly contributing to the delivery of developmental activities. This research acknowledges the crucial role of host country offices in the diverse outcomes of development interventions by international volunteers; thus leading to the central question: *How do host country offices negotiate the multiple and diverse relationships involved in setting up and overseeing international volunteering service in development projects?*

Malawi closely reflects the historical and current challenges of development in the context of global politics and economics. Also, its multitude of active NGOs and INGOs, and its long history of engaging with international volunteers from a diverse range of countries make it an ideal choice for this study.

The research activities consist of a number of elements which involve interacting with the host country office during an eight-ten week period through:

- **Stakeholder Analysis:** A mapping study of the individuals, groups or organisations that can affect or are affected by what the host country office does.
- **One-to-one interviews:** with senior staff of the parent organisation and the host country offices; representatives of some of the partner organisations, target beneficiaries and the international volunteers. Each interview will take approximately 1 hour involve and will involve talking about experiences and knowledge. Audio-recording may be used to record the activities for greater accuracy during analysis.
- **Observation** of the formal and informal host country office activities in working with their partners, beneficiaries, and volunteers
- **Document analysis** Examination of organisational policy and procedures documents; minutes of meetings; agenda preparations; planning meetings, review meetings, seminars and workshops.

This study relies on the voluntary co-operation of the participants and contributions will be used for research purposes only. All data will be treated confidentially and no individual will be identifiable in the thesis [\[1\]](#).

I would like to thank you in advance for supporting this research. At the end of the data collection, I will be happy to conduct a feedback session with the staff of each country office, and to submit a written report to the participating development organisations within 6 months of return. In the meantime, if you have any questions at all about the study, you are welcome to contact me using the details given below.

**Contact Details:** Behi Barzegar, Development Policy and Practice, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, United Kingdom Tel: +447736 429599, In Malawi: +265 997 409061 E-mail: [behi.barzegar@open.ac.uk](mailto:behi.barzegar@open.ac.uk)

**Principal Supervisor:** Dr Rebecca Hanlin, Development Policy and Practice, The Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. E-mail: [Rebecca.hanlin@open.ac.uk](mailto:Rebecca.hanlin@open.ac.uk) or [Rebecca@africalics.org](mailto:Rebecca@africalics.org)

[\[1\]](#) *The security of the data collected has received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Open University and has been ensured under the United Kingdom Data Protection Act (1998)*



*Appendix 12: Cooperation Agreement IVC02 (Page 1 of 5)*

*Dedza District CouncilDedza District Council*

represented by

*J.J. Kanyangalazi, District Commissioner J.J.*

*Kanyangalazi, District Commissioner*

and

*Social Protection Programme*

represented by

*Ralf Radermacher, Team Leader Ralf Radermacher, Team Leader*

hereby enter into the following

## **cooperation agreement**

on the assignment of development advisors

**Appendix 12: Cooperation Agreement IVCO2 (Page 2 of 5)**

**Preamble**

This agreement follows the principles of the [REDACTED] agreement between *Malawi* and the [REDACTED] governing technical cooperation dated 9.11.1967 as amended or supplemented by arrangement dated 28.3./3.5.1973.

**Intended objectives**

[REDACTED] is currently implementing the Project *Social Protection for People in Extreme Poverty in Malawi*, commissioned by the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. The project is embedded in the framework of the National Social Support Policy (“NSSP”), adopted in 2013 by the Malawi Government. It serves as a top-level framework for social protection, currently covering the five key programs: social cash transfers, public works, school meals, village savings and loans (VSLs), and microfinance.

The country’s 28 district councils are responsible for implementing the NSSP at district level. This requires the improvement of efficiency of decentralized administrative structures and the councils’ capacity to coordinate and harmonize the five sub programmes at district level. [REDACTED] Council is one of the two pilot District Councils for a harmonised NSSP and thus a relevant actor for the implementation of new procedures and coordination mechanisms.

By mutual agreement [REDACTED] Council and [REDACTED] have agreed that development advisors will be assigned to assist the local partner organisation [REDACTED] Council in providing NSSP services. Given the important role played by [REDACTED] Council in the sector and the results structure of the above-mentioned project, development advisors are to be assigned to build its capacities. Based on the project results structure, the following mandate of and services provided by the [REDACTED] Council have been identified, and will be supported through the assignment of development advisors:

- Implementation of National Social Support Policy at district level, especially improved coordination of the sub-programmes;
- Piloting harmonized approaches including the UBR
- Support to the district level M&E

[REDACTED] Council and [REDACTED] hereby agree on the following services and activities:

- Capacity development;
- Support coordination between different NSSP sub-programmes;
- Support communication between district and central level;
- Ensure district perspective is included in NSSP discussions.

It is expected that this cooperation will result in more effective implementation of the NSSP in [REDACTED] and the documentation of lessons learned for the central level and other districts.

*Appendix 12: Cooperation Agreement IVCO2 (Page 3 of 5)*

**Core tasks of the development advisor(s)**

- Exploring the level of implementation of the National Social Support Programme (NSSP) in the district identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement;
- Supporting the development and implementation of integrated district social support committees;
- Supporting the implementation of the Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR) and harmonised targeting;
- Supporting the development of an M & E system at district level;
- Supporting the implementation of Best Practices Manuals;
- Providing support to capacity development (technical and managerial) and follow up support to capacity development/technical trainings;
- Implementing and Managing the pilot ‘Making public works inclusive’.

The rough outline of the work plan is finalised in consultation with the local partner organisation and the officer responsible for the commission no later than six months after the development advisor has commenced her assignment, and a detailed work plan is jointly drafted.

**Provision of development advisors**

Based on the job description drafted jointly with [REDACTED] Council, [REDACTED] shall enter into a contract with 1 development advisor for up to 24 expert months. The curricula vitae shall be submitted to [REDACTED] Council in advance for approval. [REDACTED] Council's approval shall be obtained in writing. [REDACTED] shall recruit and brief the development advisor. If a development advisor is being replaced, the same approval process shall apply.

**Role and integration of the development advisor**

The development advisor's line manager is [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] Malawi/Social Protection Programme.

Within [REDACTED] Council the *Director of Planning* is the contact and is responsible for steering the development advisor's technical inputs.

**[REDACTED] s inputs**

Development advisors are assigned pursuant to the [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] shall assume the following costs for the development advisor (and where applicable for his/her family):

- recruitment, selection and preparation of contract in [REDACTED]
- briefing in [REDACTED] and briefing of up to three weeks in *Malawi*
- subsistence allowance

**Appendix 12: Cooperation Agreement IVCO2** (Page 4 of 5)

- contributions to health and unemployment insurance and to pension and compulsory long-term care insurance
- outward and return flight from and to [REDACTED]
- reintegration allowance
- travel expenses for [REDACTED] events (that are required by [REDACTED])
- third-party liability insurance and contributions to school fees and security costs
- accommodation
- official vehicle, mobile phone, office equipment if not provided by the partner organisation
- other inputs directly related to the assignment of development advisors such as financial contributions, assignments of short-term experts, and HCD measures

For staffing changes (for example, if the contract is terminated prematurely), [REDACTED] shall inform [REDACTED] Council promptly, so that it can be involved to the appropriate extent.

### **[REDACTED] Council's inputs**

*Dedza District Council undertakes to provide an office, office furniture, basic stationery and a counterpart.*

The partner organisation also undertakes to:

- grant the development advisor leave of two-and-a-half working days per month for a five-day working week or three working days every month for a six-day working week
- following every two years of service, grant additional leave of eight working days for home leave, in line with [REDACTED]'s regulations
- grant the development advisor leave if:
  - [REDACTED] requires the development advisor to participate in [REDACTED] activities
  - the development advisor needs to undergo a medical examination in order to extend his/her contract
- grant the development advisor special leave in the case of the serious illness or death of a first-degree relative
- grant maternity leave to the development advisor in line with the [REDACTED] Maternity Protection Act
- participate in the exchange of expertise with [REDACTED] and the partner organisations of

■■■■ international cooperation, and allow representatives of ■■■■ and of the ■■■■ access for project/programme placement visits.

*Appendix 12: Cooperation Agreement IVC02* (Page 5 of 5)

**Validity/termination**

This cooperation agreement between ■■■■ Council and ■■■■ on assigning one development advisors shall enter into force once it has been signed by both parties. The development advisor assignment(s) shall start on 01.09.2015 at the earliest and end on 30.09.2017 at the latest.

The assignment may be extended, depending on the term of the ■■■■ commission and on whether adequate financing is secured.

This agreement may be modified at any stage by mutual agreement to reflect changed circumstances. All modifications must be made in writing.

The agreement may only be terminated by one of the parties to the contract in justified cases.

*[Place, date]*

*[Place, date]*

■■■■

Team Leader

■■■■

District Commissioner

**Appendix 13: Job Description IVCO 2** - translated from original (page 1 of 2)

As a [REDACTED] company, [REDACTED] supports the [REDACTED] Government in achieving its goals in international cooperation for sustainable development.

[REDACTED] makes a contribution to permanently improving the living conditions of local people by sending qualified specialists as development workers.

We are looking for the [REDACTED] location in Malawi

**Development worker to implement the National Social Security Strategy on district life**  
Strengthening decentralized management

**Field of activity**

The development worker will assist the District Council (DC) in implementing the National Social Support Policy (NSSP) and, in particular, improving the coordination of sub-programmes of social security in of the District. It is therefore important to make decentralized management structures more efficient. The aim is that the District Council has improved capacities to ensure the coordinating and harmonizing of sub-programmes of social security strategy of the District in technical exchange with the national level.

**Your tasks**

The Advisor will assist the District Council in the implementation and the M & E of pilot activities in the context of newly developed procedures and processes. Another advisory role is to work with the DC to develop processes and tools that improve communication between national and district levels.

**Qualifications required:**

Degree as social scientist or administrative scientist  
Experience in public administration and /or social security  
Good English skills, driver license

**The following skills round off the profile:**

Knowledge in the Field of Management/Information System  
Knowledge in the Field of Organisation Development  
Communication and Negotiation skills  
Political sensitivity

**Duration:**

36 months

**Standard Information**

Location details: [REDACTED] km south of the capital, Lilongwe.

Climate: [REDACTED] is the highest altitude city in Malawi and has a cooler climate

Health Care: There is a small district hospital in [REDACTED] good health care in Lilongwe

Shopping and care options: Limited supply in the city; small supermarket available, local products are cheap, imported goods are expensive

Accessibility: well-developed road from Lilongwe to [REDACTED] Internet access and mobile networks mostly available

Children/ infants: International School is only available in Blantyre and Lilongwe

Security: 24-hour security and safety precautions are taken at the property

***Appendix 13: Job Description IVCO 2*** - translated from original (page 2 of 2)

**General conditions:**

The location of the project is not suitable for school-aged children

***Appendix 13: Job Description IVCO 2*** - translated from original (page 2 of 2)

It is assumed that the Development Advisor is available for work in remote locations

Experience in Development work is desirable.

**Our offer**

We offer you cooperation in an innovative, globally active development policy institution.

Your skills are in demand in an interdisciplinary team on site. [REDACTED]'s development service

offers a comprehensive package of services. This also includes targeted technical and

personal preparation. The term of the contract is at least 2 years with the option of extension

**Hints**

The [REDACTED] welcomes applicants with a completed vocational training and / or completed stage who have at least two years of relevant work experience. In addition, they have the [REDACTED] citizenship of the state or [REDACTED].

If we have aroused your interest, then we look forward to your application.

**Appendix 14: Partnership Agreement IVC03** (page 1 of 7)

**Partnership Agreement between**  
**Malawi and Rural District Manager for**  
**Project**

**1) Purpose of the Partnership Agreement**

This agreement outlines the terms and conditions of a partnership agreement between Malawi (hereafter referred to as ) and Rural District Manager ( ) and to as . The address of the Organization is .

**2) Project**

The agreement covers the Project to be implemented by the and selected starting on 1 June 2015 and ending on 30 May 2018 according to the project contract with the .

**3) Funding and Volunteers Support for the Project**

agrees to provide funding for activities and 1 volunteer to the Organisation for the agreed project in line with the attached project contract, provided all the requirements as outlined in this agreement are satisfactorily fulfilled.

**3.1). Volunteers:**

**3.1.1. Job Specification and Recruitment.**

3.1.1.a has undertaken to recruit an Advisor as per the appended Project Proposal to work in your organization as part of the Project.

3.1.1.b The Organisation shall consult with prior to making any substantial changes to the volunteer's terms and conditions of service in the event that they deem such changes necessary.

**3.1.2 Volunteer Arrangements.**

3.1.2.a Upon nomination by of a suitable candidate, Curriculum Vitae shall be submitted to the employer for written approval. The employer has the right to refuse a particular candidate, but should submit in writing to the reasons for this decision, so that an alternative candidate may be identified if possible.

3.1.2.b Upon accepting a candidate, the employer needs to submit a written letter of acceptance to facilitate in obtaining clearance from the Government of Malawi Department of Public Service Management. The documents shall then be submitted to the Department of Immigration for obtaining a Volunteer Permit.

3.1.2.c undertakes to make all necessary arrangements pre-departure training in preparation for assignment to this placement, as per standard practice, and will make arrangements for travel to Malawi and back to home country upon completion of placement.

3.1.2.d On arrival in Malawi, the volunteer will attend a an in country orientation/induction course prior to starting work with the employer. The employer will undertake to arrange necessary transport to the Project for the volunteer and their luggage, following this induction course.

3.1.2.e The Start of Service (SOS) date for the volunteer is the day he/she arrives in country. The agreed volunteer allowance is payable from this date as detailed in clause 3.1.5.a



## Appendix 14: Partnership Agreement IVCO3 (page 2 of 7)

3.1.2.f On arrival at the Project, the volunteer should be met by an appropriate representative [REDACTED] who will arrange an orientation to the locality and the workplace and the volunteer will be given clear and concise instructions as to the correct lines of reporting and management to and within the Project.

3.1.2.g In all matters relating to the work of the Project, the volunteer will report directly to [REDACTED]. Only in the event of a breakdown in communications between the volunteer and the above should [REDACTED] Programme Office staff have any cause to intervene. [REDACTED] undertakes to consult with [REDACTED] if there is any major cause for concern over a volunteer's performance, conduct or ability.

3.1.2.h The [REDACTED] Programme Staff shall have the right to visit the volunteer at their place of work and to resquest reports provided that adequate prior notice has been given to the employer, as appropriate.

3.1.2.i Although the volunteer will be working directly with [REDACTED] for the benefit of the project, [REDACTED] reserve the right to recall any volunteer in the event of illness, accident, compassionate or other grounds or in the event that a volunteer's personal or professional conduct justifies such a course of action. In such cases, [REDACTED] undertakes to consult [REDACTED] fully before taking action. In the event of a volunteer leaving the project [REDACTED] will provide a replacement as soon as practicable, provided that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] agree the need to continue the placement.

3.1.2.j [REDACTED] values diversity and is an international organisation of increasingly diverse cultures. [REDACTED] staff and programme partners undertake to work with staff and volunteers from all over the world regardless of the capacity in which they work, gender, HIV status, marital status, racial or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, or age to foster mutual respect and promote a conducive working environment characterized by openness and flexibility at all times.

### 3.1.3 [REDACTED] Programme Related Courses and Conferences.

3.1.3.a Where appropriate, [REDACTED] reserves the right to request paid leave of absence for the volunteer to attend necessary courses and seminars arranged by [REDACTED] or others up to a maximum of 15 working days per annum, provided this does not cause undue interruption of the [REDACTED] work, and [REDACTED] undertakes to request such leaves of absence with adequate prior notice to the [REDACTED].

### 3.1.4 Working Hours and Leave Arrangements.

3.1.4.a Working hours should be the same as for Malawian Government employees or those adopted by [REDACTED]. On occasions it is recognised that it may be necessary for the volunteer to work in excess of these hours. At the discretion of [REDACTED] the volunteer may be recompensed by time off in lieu (TOIL).

3.1.4.b The volunteer will be granted a leave entitlement at the rate of 33 working days per full year of employment including all public holidays recognised by the Government of the Republic of Malawi. Leave entitlement shall be applicable on a pro-rata basis and should be taken during the year in which it is accrued. All applications for leave must be made within the procedural requirements of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] will not intervene in any decision made by [REDACTED] unless it contravenes the minimum leave entitlement. In the event of an agreed extension to this placement beyond 24 months, a revision in holiday entitlement will be applied to take into account extends leave at a rate of an additional 1.25 days per month of the extension period.

3.1.4.c When calculating the official end of service date at the end of the placement a volunteer may take up to a maximum of 20 working days (28 calendar days) of accrued annual leave after the last official day of work provided [REDACTED] can confirm that this leave entitlement has not been used during the placement year.

### 3.1.5 Volunteer Support Costs

3.1.5.a [REDACTED] agrees pay an allowance to an amount fixed by the [REDACTED] Malawi Programme Office, this is currently K117,000 per month. This amount is determined using a regular shopping basket survey and will be adjusted accordingly should the cost of living rise significantly.

3.1.5.b [REDACTED] works on the principle that all [REDACTED] volunteers should receive the same overall allowance as stipulated above in clause to preserve parity among the volunteer body. Some volunteers work in positions which attract extra allowances such as housing allowance. From time to time staff working in certain posts receive extra allowances for work in the field away from their normal duty station. Receipt of such allowances is specifically prohibited under volunteer terms and conditions except where it is recompense for extra costs actually incurred in carrying out their work. [REDACTED] volunteers must declare that they have received such allowances and this amount shall be deducted from

### **Appendix 14: Partnership Agreement IVC03 (page 3 of 7)**

the Top-up payments, unless it can be demonstrated that such extra payments have been used for the benefit of the placement rather than personal gain.

#### **3.1.6 Local support costs: To be read in conjunction with [REDACTED] Volunteer Accommodation and Equipment Policy**

3.1.6.a [REDACTED] undertakes to provide and meet the costs associated with secure accommodation to a minimum level as outlined in the accommodation policy including the full cost of hard furnishings to a minimum standard as appropriate to the accommodation provided:-

1 bed with mattress, 1 dining table with chairs, 1 chest of drawers wardrobe (if necessary), Lounge suite, 1 small coffee table, 1 small desk and chair, curtains, as appropriate, cooker, fridge

Note: these furnishings should be of a reasonable standard, clean and functional, but not necessarily new. All equipment remains the property of the employer and the volunteer shall be liable for damage.

3.1.6.b [REDACTED] undertakes to ensure that the accommodation meets at least the minimum standard of security provisions as outlined in the above policy.

3.1.6.b [REDACTED] will cover the cost of installation and monthly rental of emergency panic button service under certain criteria as detailed in the Panic Alarm Installation Policy

3.1.6.c The [REDACTED] undertakes to meet the cost of employment of a watchman as appropriate to the location of the accommodation and at the request of the volunteer and in line with the same volunteer accommodation policy.

3.1.6.d The volunteer will be responsible for all utilities (electricity, water, telephone) at their house including transfer of account, initial and final meter readings and timely settlement of bills. The volunteer will not be held responsible for payment of outstanding bills by previous occupants where the employer has provided the accommodation. In rented accommodation this responsibility rests with the landlord Further details of this are also documented in the Accommodation policy.

3.1.6.e The [REDACTED] Programme Office undertakes to provide the volunteer either with household equipment (e.g. bed linen, kitchen utensils, water filters, etc.) or a grant to purchase such items, in line with current policy and practice.

#### **3.1.7. Equipment**

3.1.7.a [REDACTED] will ensure that the volunteer will be suitably equipped with all the necessary materials to carry out their duties effectively, and will provide office space from which the volunteer can work.

3.1.7.b All equipment supplied by [REDACTED] will remain the property of the provider, and shall be returned by the volunteer, if applicable, on completion of the project.

#### **3.1.8. Transport.**

3.1.8.a [REDACTED] will undertake to cover the costs of transporting the volunteer and their personal effects to/from their placement at the beginning and end of the volunteer's service, on dates agreed between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

3.1.8.b [REDACTED] undertakes to provide necessary transport or to cover public transport expenses required to facilitate the volunteer's duties.

3.1.8.c [REDACTED] undertakes to meet the cost of return transport of the volunteer and colleague/s invited to attend workshops and conferences organised by [REDACTED]

#### **3.1.9 Health**

3.1.9.a In the event that a Medical Officer deems it necessary for a volunteer to be repatriated on health grounds [REDACTED] will make all the necessary arrangements and meet all costs involved.

#### **3.1.10. Insurance**

3.1.10.a Personal insurance for accident and medical costs will be the responsibility of [REDACTED], and personal effects insurance will be the responsibility of the volunteer.



**Appendix 14: Partnership Agreement IVC03** (page 4 of 7)

3.1.10.b [REDACTED] [REDACTED] will be responsible for insuring against claims by the volunteer or a third party for injury/damages resulting from a work-related accident/incident which may be made against [REDACTED] or its employees. (Employers Liability and Public Liability Insurance). [REDACTED] will be responsible for the insurance or replacement of all items and equipment provided by the employer for use by the volunteer during the course of this placement.

**3.1.11. Summary of Key Responsibilities related to volunteers:**

Clause	Details	Responsibility
	Volunteer Allowance	[REDACTED]
	Accommodation/hard furnishings	[REDACTED]
	Security of accommodation	[REDACTED]
	Provision of night watchman	[REDACTED]
	Transport of volunteer and luggage to and from placement at start and end of service.	Employer
	Transport and running costs for work purposes	[REDACTED]
	Transport to and from [REDACTED] workshops and conferences	[REDACTED]

**4) Payments for the Project**

Payment will be made from [REDACTED] to the Organisation through bank cheque. After the first payment, subsequent ones will only occur when 80% of the previous installment has been expended, all narrative and financial reports have been produced to a satisfactory standard, a joint project review has been carried out, and an action plan for the next phase produced.

**5) Changes to the Project**

Any changes to the agreed target group, project area, activities, timeline and financial plan (either to the total or to individual line items) will only be carried out by [REDACTED] Manager with the written consent of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Written consent may be in the form of a letter from [REDACTED] agreeing to changes proposed in a quarterly action plan.

**6) Usage of [REDACTED] Funds for the Project**

With respect to funds transferred by [REDACTED] in relation to this project:

- All funds will be used by [REDACTED] Manager in accordance with the agreed proposal and budget unless agreed otherwise by [REDACTED] (and ultimately [REDACTED] in writing).
- Any expenditure over the total of the agreed budget will be entirely the responsibility of [REDACTED] Manager unless agreed otherwise by [REDACTED].
- Any over-spend by 20% or more should be agreed in writing by [REDACTED] in advance of such expenses being incurred by [REDACTED] Rural District [REDACTED] Manager.
- [REDACTED] Manager will ensure and be able to demonstrate that there is no double-funding of this project with funds from another donor, agency or source.
- No funds shall be used for party politics, promoting any particular religion, immovable property purchases or environmentally harmful substances.
- Any funds not used in accordance with the agreed project or left unspent at the end of the project period, should be returned by the implementing partner to [REDACTED] unless agreed in writing otherwise.
- The use of any interest accruing to project funds held by the partner should be discussed and agreed with [REDACTED] before being utilised (normally it will be used within that same project or returned to [REDACTED]).

**7) Project Visits, Monitoring and Evaluation**

- [REDACTED] Manager will facilitate and undertake joint regular monitoring visits with a [REDACTED] representative.
- [REDACTED] Manager will facilitate visits from others [REDACTED] as requested by [REDACTED] at times that are mutually agreed.
- [REDACTED] Manager will send an appropriate representative to meetings called by [REDACTED] for the purposes of co-ordination and consultation.
- [REDACTED] Manager will undertake joint project reviews with [REDACTED] representatives on a regular basis.
- An external evaluation will be carried out as specified in the attached project proposal or if decided upon by [REDACTED] Manager and/or [REDACTED] at a later stage.

**Appendix 14: Partnership Agreement IVC03** (page 5 of 7)

**8) Narrative Reporting**

The following narrative reports shall be provided to [REDACTED] by the Organisation:

- A detailed quarterly report will be provided. The quarterly report will include a summary of the financial expenditure to date as compared with the budget. The quarterly report will also include a plan (activities and expected expenditure) for the following quarter.
- A detailed annual report will be provided for all activities in each calendar or financial year (and total expenditure for that year) by early January or April of the following year.
- A detailed end of project report covering all activities since the start of the project in the same format will be provided by the Organisation within one month of the final date of the project.

**9) Financial Records and Reporting**

The following financial reports shall be provided to [REDACTED] by [REDACTED] Manager:

- A receipt will be written by [REDACTED] Manager to [REDACTED] for each transfer of funds [REDACTED] a photocopy of the bankbook or similar confirmation from [REDACTED] Manager bank.
- [REDACTED] Manager will maintain separate records and vouchers in support of funds claimed and expended under this agreement for the inspection of [REDACTED] officers as required. These records will be maintained by [REDACTED] Manager until it is released in writing from this requirement.
- Quarterly financial reports for the duration of the project according to the specified format showing amounts received and expended to date for the project in the beginning of the next quarter.
- An audited Utilisation Certificate for the whole project shall be given to [REDACTED] within one month after the end of the agreed project period set out in the same format as the budget in the proposal.
- [REDACTED] Manager agrees to facilitate any other audits that may be requested in relation to the project by [REDACTED]'s auditor, or one of its donors to the project.

**10) Purchase and Usage of Goods Purchased Under the Project**

- [REDACTED] Manager shall ensure that it employs competitive bidding in all procurement for project implementation. A purchasing committee of a minimum of two staff members shall be used to oversee project procurement. Competitive bidding requires three or more qualified suppliers be asked to provide written quotations for purchases totaling the agreed amount. [REDACTED] Manager will offer the contract to the best overall offer (lowest cost for the required quality and quantity). Records of all such transactions will be maintained for inspection by [REDACTED] on request.
- All goods purchased under the project should only be used in line with the project proposal. If at the end of the project, goods remain unallocated or unused, they should only divert to another use with the written agreement of [REDACTED].

**11) Terms of Relationship and Liabilities**

- This agreement is entered into with [REDACTED] Manager for undertaking the project, as outlined in the attached proposal, and therefore does not create an 'agent-principal' relationship between either of the two parties. [REDACTED] Manager shall therefore not claim or represent themselves as legal agents/representatives of [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED] will assume no responsibility for any injuries, death or any legal action in respect of office bearers/employees/agents/functionaries of [REDACTED] Manager arising out of any activity related to this agreement.
- [REDACTED] Manager is fully responsible for all government taxation requirements, legal compliances and reporting in relation to this project.

**12) Other**

[REDACTED] will:

- Acknowledge [REDACTED] Manager as a partner in any contact (related to this project) with government agencies, the media, and other donors and so on.
- Facilitate technical and management support or training for organisational capacity building, where appropriate and if requested.
- Share with [REDACTED] Manager reports, or relevant parts of reports that pertain to work done by [REDACTED] Manager that it sends to donor agencies.
- Provide feedback and share openly with [REDACTED] Manager any significant information gathered from monitoring visits.



**Appendix 14: Partnership Agreement IVCO3** (page 6 of 7)

██████████ Manager will:

- Acknowledge the ██████████ as a partner in any contact (related to this project) with government agencies, the media, other donors and so on.
- Contribute to ██████████'s own policy and organisational development when requested as far as is reasonably possible.
- Support the development of ██████████'s other partners through meetings, exchange visits and so on as far as is reasonably possible.
- Provide access to project records, staff and field areas to ██████████ and its visitors at any time within normal office hours, provided one week's notice is given.
- Observe as far as possible and practical the following non-negotiable principles in the course of project implementation:
  - targeting the poorest
  - improving the material quality of life, capacity building and empowerment of the target group
  - community participation
  - a right based approach that addresses the causes of problems through advocacy where appropriate
  - sustainable approaches
  - gender, ethnic and religious equity
  - promotion of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention
  - transparency, co-ordination and co-operation with similar organizations, local government and other stakeholders
  - cost awareness and effectiveness
  - documentation and learning through effective monitoring and evaluation

**13) Early Termination of this agreement**

- Either party may terminate this agreement for any reason, giving 90 days written notice in advance to the other party.
- Whichever party terminates the agreement, ██████████ reserves the right to recover from ██████████ Manager the unused funds released and the assets created out of released funds.
- In the case of financial irregularities with ██████████ Manager, ██████████ has the right to claim a refund for the spent amount.
- Upon completion of activities covered herein to the satisfaction of both parties, this agreement shall be terminated automatically.
- The project shall be subject to adequate funding from ██████████

**14) This agreement will be governed by the Law of Malawi.**

**Attachments**

☒ ██████████ Project proposal including timeline and budget (tick box)

██████████ Partnership Guidelines are also to be given to the partner at the point of signing this.

**Appendix 14: Partnership Agreement IVCO3** (page 7 of 7)

**ACCEPTED**

For and on behalf of:

[REDACTED]

Name of authorised signatory:

[REDACTED]

Designation:

Country Director

Signature:

Date:

We do hereby accept the terms and conditions of this contract as set out in this agreement, written and by our signature hereto, we bind ourselves to abide by these terms in totality.

**ACCEPTED**

For and on behalf of:

Name of authorised signatory:

Designation:

Signature:

Date:

29/09/15

**Appendix 1: Partnership Objectives**

The partnership between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Manager under the [REDACTED] project has the following objectives:

- To improve access to [REDACTED] technology [REDACTED] and technical capacity to maintain and upgrade infrastructure.
- To increase [REDACTED] capacity to utilize technology and improve their pedagogy.
- To improve capacity of [REDACTED] to manage and integrate [REDACTED] in teaching.
- To provide access to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to utilize technology to increase their learning.
- To engage effectively with key stakeholders to achieve learning for long term positive learning outcomes.

*Appendix 15: Job Description IVCO 3 - (page 1 of 6)*

PLACEMENT OUTLINE COVERSHEET	
To:	
Programme Manager:	
Date:	May 2013
Reference Number:	
Job Title:	Development Advisor
Country:	Malawi
Programme Area:	
Goal(s)	
Employer:	
New Employer?	No
Employer Type	Government Agency
Address of placement location:	
Firm? Yes/No (with reason if tentative)	Yes
New job or replacement?	New Job
Earliest start date:	October 2013
Length of placement (in months)	8-12 months (flexible)
<p><b>Names and email addresses &amp;/or Phone Numbers of serving volunteers and returned volunteers, that can be contacted by prospective volunteers looking at this placement including e.g. volunteers working with same partner, at similar placements or nearby locations.</b></p> <p></p>	
<p><b>Potential for posting with a 'volunteering partner' or 'accompanying partner'?</b></p> <p>None, as no other placements in the vicinity are envisaged</p>	
<p><b>Funding</b></p> <p><b>Is this placement part of a funded project? Yes</b> (Annual Strategic Fund)</p>	
<p><b>If yes, what is/are the fund code(s)?</b></p> <p>Fund code(s) should also be entered on ( database)</p>	
<p><b>Date of (last) placement assessment or partnership review:</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> July 2013</p>	
<p><b>Date of latest documentation update (if different):</b></p>	

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**IMPORTANT REFERENCE INFORMATION**

This placement documentation provides information specific to this particular placement. Additionally, prospective volunteers should read the following **essential** country-level information, which can be found on [REDACTED]

- Country briefing pack <http://>
- Medical information
- Security information <http://>
- Programme strategy/background information (though these documents are somewhat out of date and thus do not reflect the type of work envisaged here)

<http://>  
<http://>

The following information about the local area can also be found on:

- Partner/employer information <http://>
- Location information
- Partnership agreement, including terms and conditions (not available on [REDACTED] but e-version can be sent on request)

**PLACEMENT OUTLINE**

**Please Note:** [REDACTED] tries to ensure that the information in Placement Outlines is accurate at the time of writing. However, [REDACTED] relies on information received from external sources and **circumstances can change. Placement Outlines should be seen merely as a guide.** [REDACTED] does not accept any liability in the event that any information is inaccurate. With new partners and new placements, volunteers need to be particularly prepared for changes to arise as it becomes clearer what the needs are once in placement.

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**PLACEMENT PROFILE**

**Headlines:**

To include any recent programme developments or achievements, future developments

[REDACTED] Malawi has been working with [REDACTED] for the last six years supporting the service to strengthen the HIV&AIDS response [REDACTED]. An HIV&AIDS management structure in the service was set up and [REDACTED] staff was trained in managing the programmes by [REDACTED] through volunteers and training workshops. A study initiated and carried out by [REDACTED] established that there is significant transmission of HIV among [REDACTED] largely due to sexual abuse [REDACTED]. This is appalling at the level of the individual [REDACTED] but in addition if it is not controlled and managed, it has the potential of spilling over to the larger population making the efforts to fight HIV difficult.

The UNODC United Nations Office [REDACTED] describes a model [REDACTED] that is managed on the basis of justice and humanity in which [REDACTED] spend their time engaged in purposeful activities such as education, vocational skills training and health care [REDACTED]. However, the Malawi [REDACTED] fall short of these standards. Care and support [REDACTED] particularly those with HIV and TB remain a challenge as there are significant shortfalls in food supply and nutrition due to erratic government funding since food is mostly dependent on central government subvention.

Though there are rehabilitation and transformation services [REDACTED] such as education and some skills development, they are inadequate, in that that many [REDACTED] come out with little or no rehabilitation [REDACTED]. With this background of challenges facing the Malawi [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and the Malawi [REDACTED] have developed an integrated rights based framework of interventions that should bring long term and sustainable provision of services which enables the Malawi



...to improve ...management and easily meet all basic human needs while developing the... skills and behaviour to facilitate re integration into society. .

**Background and rationale for placement:**

To include how this placement builds on achievements/activities of any previous volunteers with reference, where appropriate, to the relevant objectives in the Country Strategic Plan and Programme Area Plan.

The Malawi... is a government Department whose constitutional mandate is to house persons... It derives its mandate from Chapter XVII of the Republic of Malawi Constitution, the ... Act and relevant subsidiary legislation made there under. One of the challenges of the ... Services is insufficient funding by government hence the ... services faces challenges to achieve sustainable rehabilitation, reformation and transform of... This is further compounded by lack of technical and vocational experts to develop the ... capacity to impart skills ... as a sustainable rehabilitation and reformation measure.

**Overall placement purpose and specific placement/partner objectives:**

These are subject to change – the final work plan will be subject to agreement between the volunteer, the employer and ... at the start of the placement.

This is a long-term development programme for ... and the Malawi..., which is expected to see the Malawi ... to be self-sufficient in the provision of services ... and become a model for learning and development. The placement has been developed to begin a process of enhancing the capacity of Malawi ... to sustain itself in its operations in the country's ... in order to reduce abuse, which leads to new HIV infections and mental trauma..., particularly juvenile... The seed funding will be utilised as a pilot to generate learning. That learning will be used to raise bigger funding which will ultimately assist the service to become a self sustaining entity that is able to provide rights based reformation, rehabilitation and transformation

This will be achieved through two complementary initiatives:

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1. Supporting the Malawi ... to develop and use policies and systems on ... gardens, which will improve the physical and mental health of ..., as well as increase food production, and develop the skills ... . Once policies are developed, they will be piloted in three ...

**Likely duties and responsibilities of the volunteer:** these are subject to change – the final work plan will be subject to agreement between the volunteer, the employer and ... at the start of the placement.

The ... Development Advisor provides advice on the use and management of Malawi ... agricultural land. Typically s/he specialises either in business or technical expertise. Whatever the specialisation, the ultimate aim of the post is to balance the commercial viability of the Malawi ... Agricultural land with sustainable development to increase food production, and develop the skills ... and staff ... . Key tasks include:

- Visiting ... farms to facilitate data collection, measurement, analysis and interpretation;
- Designing ... farm structures, equipment and processes;
- Giving demonstrations and presentations on land, water and machinery utilization;
- Developing ways to conserve soil and water
- Improving the processing and storage of plant/crop and livestock products
- Designing farmhouses, barns, and other farm structures.
- Planning sanitation, ventilation, and heating systems in farm structures.

- Providing advice on machinery used for tilling, fertilization, and harvesting
- Developing ways to use power for curing and drying crops.
- Designing irrigation, drainage, and flood control systems
- Preparing reports;

A large proportion of the work is office based, while regular visits to [REDACTED] farms may require a substantial amount of car travel, although the distance and the need for overnight stays depend on the location of the target [REDACTED] Area.

*Note: if there is flexibility regarding length of the placement please indicate in this session what might be achieved in the different timescales.*

#### **VOLUNTEER PROFILE**

##### **Professional skills/competencies:**

Essential : A Degree in Agricultural Engineering, Irrigation Engineering or Horticulture

Desirable: A relevant Postgraduate Qualification in any of the above technical areas

##### **Professional qualifications and experience:**

Essential : Due to the nature of the work, it helps if the volunteer enjoys working outdoors. The role is suitable for individuals with evidence of:

- Initiative;
- Good written and oral communication skills;
- Sales and persuasion skills, along with the ability to maintain relationships;
- Technical and analytical skills;
- Business acumen;

The ability to work well within a team.

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##### **Personal Qualities**

**Commitment to Learning** – This will be an essential quality. The volunteer will take a lead in taking the organization through a self assessment hence there will be need to have this facilitated rather than doing the actual assessment for them.

**Working with others** – The ability to fully involve others in both identifying issues and seeking solutions

**Ability or willingness to learn to ride a motorbike?** Please state if required for this placement.

Not necessary

#### **PLACEMENT SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

For general location & organisational information please see [REDACTED]

**Partner Profile/Organisational Summary (include any information not on [REDACTED])**

**Potential sources of Professional Support i.e. line manager/counterpart/volunteers and Programme Office**

The volunteer will be located at and formally report to the Chief Commissioner [REDACTED]

and other staff at the National [REDACTED] Headquarters in [REDACTED]

In terms of [REDACTED] Path to Partnership materials including the GSAP toolkit the volunteer will receive remote support from the SL Senior Programme Manager in the [REDACTED] Programme office in Lilongwe (4-5 hours drive north [REDACTED]) where an initial briefing and end of placement debrief will be arranged.

**Risks and assumptions and other key considerations/factors prospective volunteer should be aware of as identified during the organisational assessment and actions agreed to minimise these risks:** Minimal in this instance, this is an established and committed partner who have supported and appreciated their volunteers well in the past. The short placement does not need significant resources or external funding to accomplish and any changes in staff will in fact be taken into account as part of the process.

**Terms and Conditions:** These should be placement specific and could relate to annual leave, hours of work, work related travel and work place conditions, etc. Working hours are 7.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday with 1 hour for lunch. In all other respects the volunteer should consider themselves an employee of Malawi [REDACTED] Services and be bound by their conditions of service.

**Resources available at the placement:** Office space will be provided by Malawi [REDACTED] Services at the National [REDACTED] Headquarters and the volunteer will be allowed to access other office facilities including internet at the same offices.

**Language requirements:** Chichewa is the language spoken across the whole of Malawi. Many Malawians speak good English although this is not so much the case when it comes to poorer rural or urban communities. Most of the staff that the volunteer will be working with understand and speak English.

**Security:** The volunteer will have a well-secured house within [REDACTED] City. The doors will be lockable and a night guard may be provided.

**Medical****(i) Distance and travelling times from Programme Office and nearest major centre & what medical facilities are available there e.g. hospitals / HIV/Aids Care?**

The placement is some 4-5 hours drive or 6 hours by bus from the programme office in Lilongwe.

██████ is approximately 60km from ██████, which is the main commercial city of Malawi. ██████ also has two of Malawi's best equipped and staffed hospitals

**(ii) Common health complaints in the placement location**

None specific to ██████ – see medical information above.

**(iii) Risk of malaria**

High all year round –but with a peak after the rains in March-May.

**Any gender issues particular to this placement**

None specified – although an ability to be aware of and analyse issues with a gender lens will be expected – e.g. always asking the question “in what way is this different for men, women, youth, etc”

**Motorbike riding essential Yes/No**

If motorbike riding is not required please give details of any available transport – Malawi ██████ Services have vehicles and drivers for work purposes, for personal use there is local minibus taxi transport around town although these services stop soon after nightfall.

**Likely accommodation**

State if accommodation is shared and availability of electricity and water

Accommodation with electricity and water will also be provided by ██████, on a sharing basis, rented within the locality of ██████ City.

**Location information specific to placement**

There are three volunteers based in ██████ working in HIV/AIDS, Health and Climate Change Projects and a significant academic experts population.

**Any additional information not covered above or on ██████ regarding this placement?**